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INSIDE TODAY

U.S. NEWS

A NEW ERA



President Barack Obama, left, meets with Chinese Vice Premier Wang Qishan, right, and Chinese State Councilor Dai Bingguo following his remarks during the opening session of the first U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, Monday, July 27, 2009.

See International News on
Page B2

SPORTS NEWS

REINSTATED



This is a July 20, 2009 file photo showing former Atlanta Falcon quarterback Michael Vick arriving at federal court in Norfolk, Va. Vick was conditionally reinstated by NFL commissioner Roger Goodell on Monday July 27, 2009, and could play in regular season games as early as October.

See Sports Today on Page B10

Dutch royal visit for Caribbean island Aruba

Princess Margriet opens Aruba Archeological Museum



ORANJESTAD - Princess Margriet and her husband Pieter van Vollenhoven opened Aruba's new Archeological Museum on Sunday evening. The Royal Couple was accompanied by members of the Aruban Government and their husbands & wives, Prime Minister of the Netherlands Antilles, Secretary of State Ank Bijleveld and Minister Ronald Plasterk of Holland.

Continued on Page 4



OCEANIA RESORT RESIDENCES OPENS ITS DOORS



ORANJESTAD — Recently Oceania Resort Residences Phase II opened its doors. Oceania Resort Residences is an exclusive project that received good acceptance and admiration.

Oduber was also present and congratulated the owners of Oceania with this beautiful condominium that will help elevate the quality of Aruba's tourism.

He also added that, even though there is a world crisis,

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investors believe in Aruba and this is a sign that our country can look forward to a very positive future.

He thanked the owners for their confidence in Aruba and wished them good luck. □

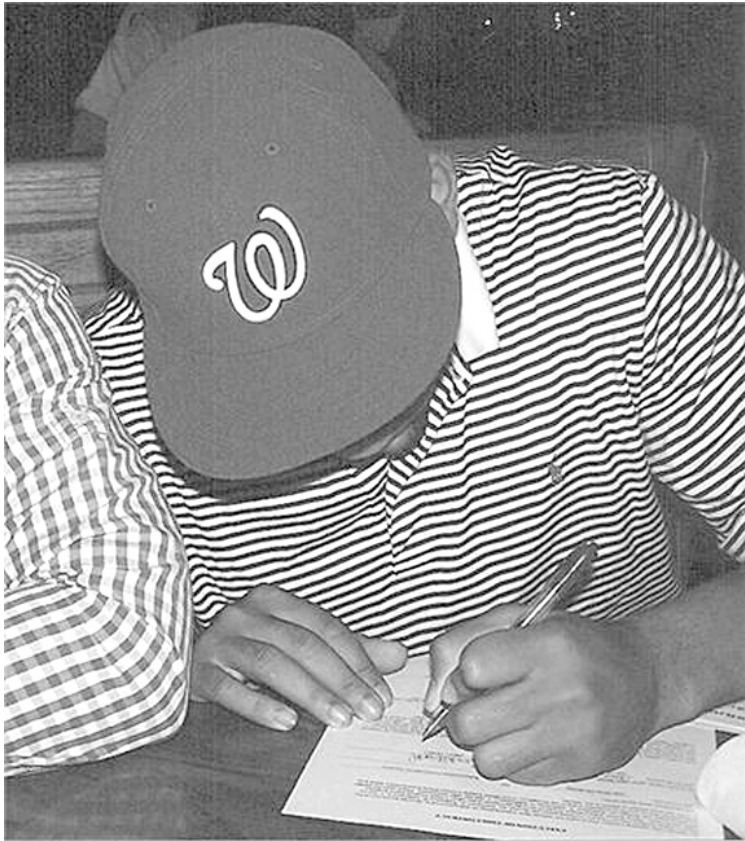
Aruba TODAY

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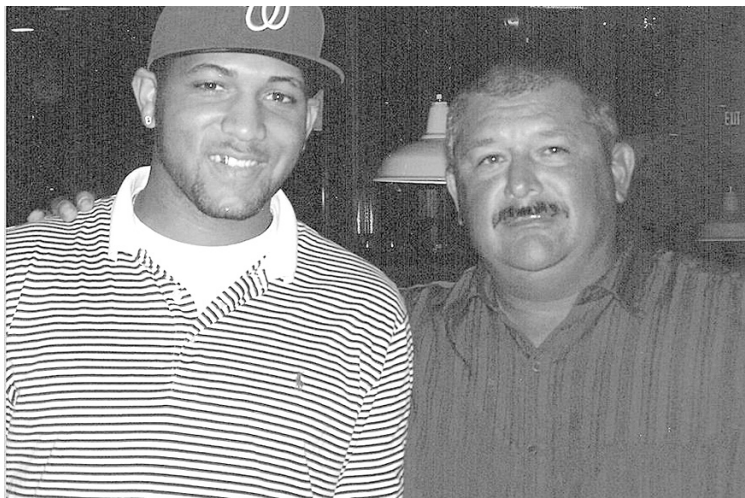


THANKS FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION

Aruban baseball player drafter to the Major Leagues



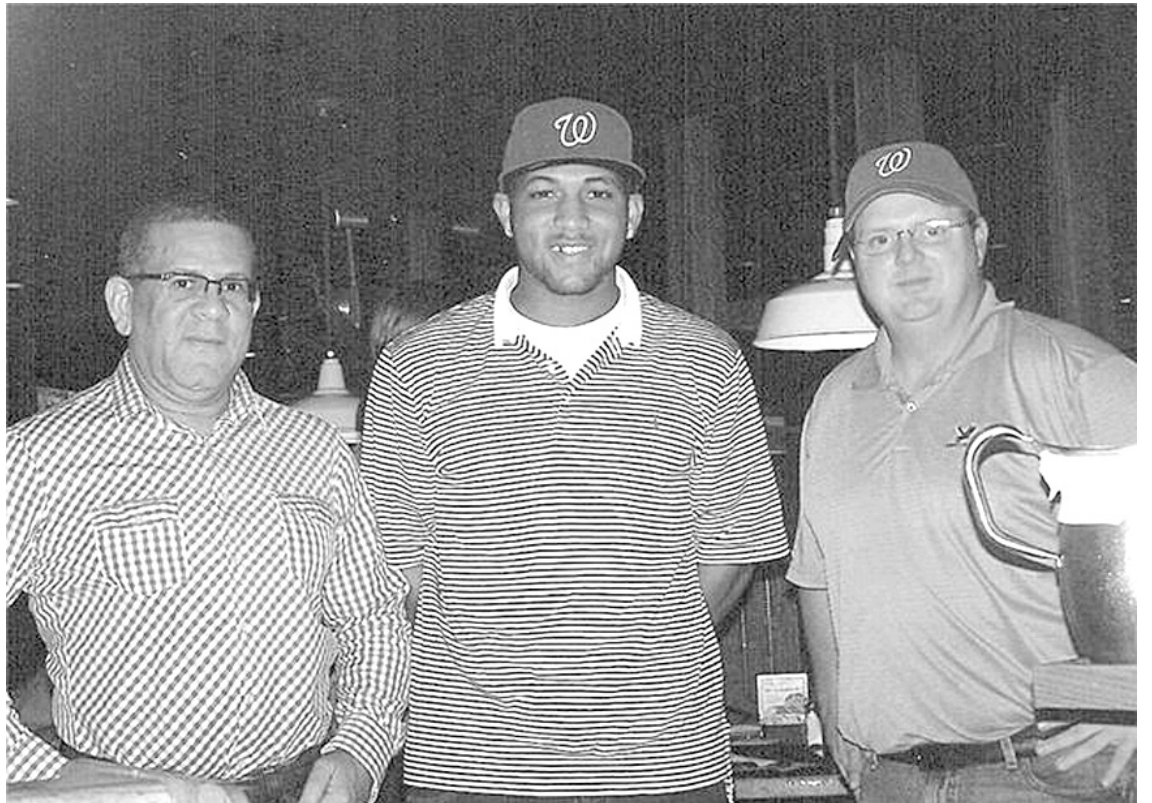
ORANJESTAD - Last week, Aruban Born baseball player Gianison Boekhoudt signed a contract during the Major League Draft where the Washington Nationals drafted Gianison in the 26th round. The contract is for \$100,000. for three years.



Happy Birthday Jorge



A special Happy Birthday wish to Jorge Zarraga (right) on his 30th birthday today. Tonight you will be celebrating with new and old friends at the South Beach Lounge and then again for the big fundraising bash on Friday at Sr. Frogs. See you there! □



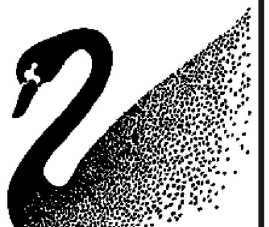
Boekhoudt graduated from San Nicolas and then went to the Filomonta College in study for 4 years in Holland where continued to play ball prior to going to the USA. □

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Princess Margriet opens Aruba Archeological Museum



Continued from Front Page

Her Royal Highness also inaugurated the Arikok National Park on Sunday morning after opening the Games of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Dakota on Saturday evening.

The Canada born younger sister of Dutch Queen Beatrix, and her husband arrived on the neighboring of Curaçao on Thursday and they continued their journey to Aruba Saturday. Professor Van Vollenhoven will also visit the islands of Saint Eustatius and Saba after his stay on Aruba.

The 'Koninkrijksspelen' or 'Kingdom Games' bring together youth from the three constituent parts of the Kingdom of the Netherlands: the Netherlands, Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles. The



games are held every two years.

These games will be the last one with three countries participating, as the Netherlands Antilles will cease to exist as a separate country next year. The islands of Curaçao and Saint Martin will gain the same semi-



independent status as Aruba and the three remaining islands in the Netherlands Antilles (Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba) will come under administration from The Hague. □



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Aruba earns first-ever JLWS berth

Of the latest two teams to qualify for the 29th annual Junior League World Series in Taylor, one will be making its first appearance; the other is a former world champion returning for the seventh time.

The Aruba North Little League all-stars from Oranjestad, Aruba, won the Latin American Regional Tournament in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico. As a result, Aruba will become the 22nd international country represented in the World Series for the best teams of 13- and 14-year-old players.

A second Latin America team from the Juan Bibiloni Little League in Yabucoa, Puerto Rico, received an automatic berth this year as the Puerto Rican national champion. The same league has been represented in Taylor six times and won the world championship in 1990.

World Series Director Greg Bzura said he's looking forward to Aruba, Puerto Rico and eight more teams that will converge on Heritage Park August 15-22. The other two teams that have qualified are the Saipan Little League from Saipan in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, winners of the Asia-Pacific Region, and the Friuli Venezia Giulia Little League from Italy, champions of the region that includes Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Italy also will be making its first appearance in the Junior League World Series.

Bzura noted that since a team from Puerto Rico has not won the world championship in 10 years, they may be "due." However, he also said the series can be won by newcomers as evidenced by the world championship won last year by a team from Willemstad, Curacao, in the Netherland Antilles.

The World Series includes five international teams. The fifth will be the national champion of Canada, whose tournament commences August 6 in Langley, British Columbia.

The other five teams in the World Series are from the United States. USA regional tournaments will take place in the days leading up to the World Series in New Jersey, California, Texas, Georgia and Indiana. The Michigan state champions in the 13- and 14-year-old division will play in Fort Wayne, Indiana, starting August 8.

To win the Latin American Region, Team Aruba had to defeat a team from Mexicala, Mexico, in its home country, 9-8, in nine innings. Mexico, which went into the title game unbeaten, never led in the game but kept battling back to tie the score throughout the extra innings. The Latin American Region of the Junior League World Series was formed in 2000. Since then, teams from Venezuela and Panama have won regional championships

three times each. Other Latin American champs have come from Mexico, St. Thomas of the U.S. Virgin Islands and Curacao. Curacao (2008) and Panama City (2005) have gone on to win world championships.

A second Latin American team receives an automatic berth in the series.

The national champs of Puerto Rico and Mexico alternate years due to the popularity of baseball in both countries. Last year, a team from Mexico

played in Taylor; this year, it's Puerto Rico's turn. (Mexico also could have qualified had the all-stars won the Latin American Region.)

Puerto Rico became the first international country represented in Taylor in 1982 and teams from Puerto Rico have won the Junior League championship five times: Manati in 1983 and 1989, Yabucoa in 1990, Cayey in 1993 and Arroyo in 1999.

The Juan Bibiloni Little

League of Yabucoa has played in Taylor six times as Puerto Rican national champions: 1984, 1986, 1990, 1998, 1999 and 2005.

Recently the national champions of Aruba and Puerto Rico played for the Latin American Regional championship in the Senior League for players 15 and 16 years old. In that game, the Aruba South Little League defeated Yabucoa, 19-2, to qualify for the Senior League World Series in Bangor, Maine. □

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Summer Carnival brings Willemstad to Maas River

ROTTERDAM--For one day, the Dutch port city of Rotterdam was transferred into Willemstad along the Maas River. The Coolsingel Avenue had a close resemblance Saturday to Breedestraat, during the 2009 round of Summer Carnival.

Even the usual fitful Dutch summer was replaced by sunny weather with a Caribbean feel to it, which gave extra lustre to the Carnival parade through Rotterdam city centre. The 29 troupes that participated in the parade

did not give the impression that the Netherlands is currently suffering from a deep economic crisis. The 2,300 beautifully costumed participants, more than half of whom were of Antillean descent, the 26 floats, and some 900,000 spectators turned the 25th jubilee edition of the event into one big swinging party.

That party already started on Friday evening with the finale of the Battle of Drums, in which several brass bands battled for the main prize. Just like last year, Brass Eternity Music, which has

its roots in Curaçao, was elected best brass band of the Netherlands.

The battle was fought between Capelle Brass Explosion (Capelle aan den IJssel), Brass Eternity Music (Rotterdam), The Legendairs (The Hague) and Rhythm Sensation Brass (Delft).

These four made it into the finals through preliminaries held during the Ortel Dunya Festival, which had taken place in Rotterdam at the end of May.

Brass Eternity will be

representing the Netherlands during the Notting Hill Carnival in West London on Sunday, August 30, and Monday, August 31. The band was founded in 1999 by youths from Curaçao who had moved to Holland to study.

Not only Stichting Zomercarnaval (Foundation Summer Carnival) Chairman Karel Willems, but also the Police were content with the event's outcome.

After several serious incidents in the 1990s,

security measures such as preventive body searches and a ban on drugs in the city centre are being taken to prevent more mishaps.

During the big street parade two persons were held for possession of soft drugs. During the evening hours, the police had to interfere in several small fights in which 18 people were arrested.

A deadly stabbing had nothing to do with Summer Carnival, close investigations by the police revealed. □



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Five USVI Little League team members have H1N1 flu

By Susan Mann

Caribbean Net News USVI Correspondent

ST CROIX, USVI -- Five members of the USVI Little League team who were competing in a regional tournament in Curacao have been taken ill with the H1N1 flu. Acting USVI Health Commissioner Julia Sheen said in a press release issued by her office on Friday that she had been in contact with the physician who was treating the young sportsmen in Curacao, and that they are no longer exhibiting symptoms. The team members were scheduled to return to the USVI over the weekend. The group was representing the territory at the Caribbean Regional Tournament which started on Saturday, July 18 and was scheduled to finish on Saturday, the 26th. The team participants, ranging from 11 to 12 years of age, all hail from St Croix.

Fourteen team members and seven adults attended the Curacao event. Seven of the USVI team members began showing symptoms this past Wednesday. After an initial screening the test results were sent to Holland for further testing. The test results, which were made available on Friday, indicated that five of the seven team members tested positive for the H1N1 virus. The Little League team was forced to postpone a scheduled, Wednesday night game against Bermuda. The press release also stated that Curacao officials have told USVI Health Department officials that team members from other parts of the Caribbean in the tournament had also taken ill, but it was not known whether they had also tested positive. □

Fishes & More invites you to a special Earlybird Menu

Fishes & More specialize in fresh fish and seafood, and at the same time please the non-fish lovers as well. All the dishes are prepared a la minute by an internationally experienced kitchen team, which gives the twist to our dishes. Influences from all over the world are found back on the menu and they are already well known for our daily changing specials. If you have a large party, or if there is anything you feel like in particular, Fishes & More can always arrange



to have your dinner cooked just for you, as they work only with fresh and honest products! Ideally located in front of the Occidental Resort

(Former Allegro), they are visited both by individuals and families alike, as we have a kids playground and a kids menu to entertain them, so they can enjoy

their dinner as much as you will yours! We have entertainment every night at 8PM, and even after dinner the perfect night out continues, as you can shop till you drop since the shops on our friendly square are open until eleven. See what its like to experience real fresh dining joy with a twist!

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The Earlybird Menu

Served between 4 pm & 6.30 pm

Soup of the day

Mixed Salad or Ceasar Salad

Catch of the day

Filet Mignon

Fettuccini Alfredo

Chicken Breast

Hot chocolate fudge Sunday

All main courses are served with potatoes au Gratin & fresh vegetables

Early bird menu is priced at \$ 21.75

Service charge not included.

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day with the Discover Scuba Dive Course, get PADI certified or join us on our daily one and two tank dives. Red Sail Sports is Aruba's lead-ing dive and watersports operator. Activity desks are located at the Hyatt Regency, Marriott Resorts and on Renaissance Island.

To make reservations call 586-1603 or go to www.redsail-aruba.com. Be sure to visit one of Red Sail Sports' stores for the latest in swimwear, beach essentials, T-shirts and souvenirs.



CasaTua Barcelona Downtown & Pizzeria Palm Beach

The Casa Tua Barcelona downtown atmosphere is cool and relaxed with its in- and outside seating while the Pizzeria Palm Beach location serves their guests on a cozy outside terrace.

Both restaurants serve the same brick-oven thin crusted pizzas and both pour the same homemade Sangria. Where the restaurants differ from each other is certain menu items and the opening hours. Casa Tua Barcelona downtown is open for lunch with delicious lunch specials from Monday till Friday. One lunch special is a \$ 9.95 Beef Tenderloin with red wine sauce. All nights of the week Casa Tua Barcelona serves Cold and Hot tapas as appetizers or the delicious Iberian Ham Pata Negra which we import directly from Andalucía. As your main course you should choose the



fabulous Paella, traditionally prepared on the spot by the chef!

The staff at both popular eateries have set the standard on the island for the term "great service" not only with your dining pleasure, but recognized as 'the' professionals in assisting guests with the perfect cocktail, paired wine or other beverages.

Casa Tua Barcelona offers a live flamenco show on Fridays while you can enjoy daily live music at Pizzeria Arawak. Wherever you decide to go, you won't be disappointed.



At Arawak Gardens enjoy the EarlyBird Special:
From 5.30 – 7.00 for \$ 19.95

Choice: Soup or Salad as appetizer, Chicken Breast Francesa or Linguini Pomodoro or Penne Pesto or Pasta Carbonara as main course and a choice of Flan a l'orange or chocolate mousse as dessert.

Casa Tua Barcelona Downtown
open from 11.30am – 10.30pm,
Sundays from 5pm – 10.30pm Tel.
588 5695

Casa Tua Pizzeria Palm Beach
open from 5pm to 11pm 7 days a
week tel 586 8470

"Early Bird: daily 5-7pm
3-course dinner
for \$29.75 per person"



Experience Papillon's gripping story! Introducing a catching special for the early Birds

PALM BEACH – Henri Charrière, one of the world's most famous prisoners, would surely have had the time of his life at Papillon Restaurant in The Village, across from the Radisson Resort. Nicknamed Papillon because of the butterfly tattoo on his chest, the Frenchman was the first convict to escape from Devil's Island, something that nobody had ever done before. Charrière's thrilling, gripping...

auto-biography has been the concept behind Papillon Restaurant. The décor, the decorations and especially the restrooms wink at the thirteen terrible years Papillon spent in prison in French Guyana. Papillon restaurant's menu reflects the Frenchman's arduous journey to freedom: classic French dishes have been dusted with daring Caribbean flair and are a culinary journey for your taste buds. The spacious outside terrace is perfect for casual fine dining; the iron bars, flecks of rust and stains on the walls make one very glad not to be in Papillon's shoes in the 1940's! Charrière would undoubtedly have loved 'his' place on Aruba: this is luxury living for anyone!

Early Bird

Papillon Restaurant offers a daily Early Bird special. A delicious 3-course meal with a glass of house wine for just \$29.75 per person between 5pm and 7pm

Opening hours

Papillon's opening hours are from 5 pm until midnight. The restaurant's daily specials will be explained by the staff. For reservations, please call 586 5400 or go to www.papillonaruba.com.

Papillon Restaurant is located in The Village, just across from the Radisson Resort.

Papillon
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Kitchen open every day from 5pm till 10.30pm. Early Bird from 5pm till 7pm.
All major credit cards accepted. Reservations recommended.
Papillon Restaurant @ The Village (across from Radisson),
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Email: reservations@papillonaruba.com Internet: www.papillonaruba.com



Read ARUBA TODAY every day

Royal Dutch Marines and families welcomed to Aruba



PALM BEACH -- Families Timmerman, Marja and Maickel, and the V/D Worps, Marc, Liesbeth, their two kids Nick, 8, and Iris, 4, arrived on Aruba from Holland. Maickel and Marc have just been stationed on duty here as Royal Marines,

and their families naturally followed to support them. They will be living here for three years and what better way to celebrate a new beginning, a new adventure, a new lifestyle than the culinary adventures of Amazonia Churrascaria. The



families' honeymoon with the island, the beach, the sun the weather has just began, and all that glory accompanied by a caipirinha is almost too good to be true. □



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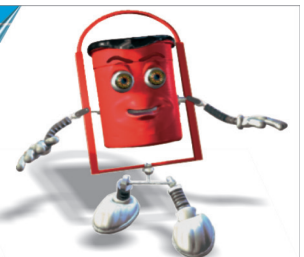
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THANKS FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION

Jenn enjoys a Bridal Shower at the Hyatt Regency



PALM BEACH – Jenn Aldridge – Coster enjoyed a post-nuptials bridal shower at the Hyatt Regency over Sunday brunch. The Tulsa Oklahoma native married to local hotelier David Coster was showered with gifts and attention, befitting a newly-wed bride. Organized by Tina & Jodi, brunch was a lot of fun and welcomed Jenn to her new circle of family members and friends in Aruba. Jenn & David will be going on a Caribbean cruise for their honeymoon. □





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Famed choreographer Merce Cunningham dies at 90



FILE - A 1973 file photo shows American Choreographer and dancer Merce Cunningham. Cunningham died on Sunday, July 26, 2009 at his Manhattan home of natural causes, a spokeswoman for the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, Leah Sandals, says. He was 90.

(AP Photo/Steven Mark Needham, File)

By POLLY ANDERSON,
Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK – Choreographer and dancer Merce Cunningham was hailed Monday as a revolutionary artist who remade the very definition of dance.

Cunningham — who was still working as he marked his 90th birthday just 3 1/2 months ago — died on Sunday at his Manhattan home, said Leah Sandals, spokeswoman for the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. She said he died of natural causes but declined to elaborate.

The onetime Martha Graham dancer was credited with remaking modern dance by creating works of pure movement divorced from storytelling and even from musical accompaniment.

“I’d rather find out something than repeat what I know,” he once said. “I prefer adventure to something that’s fixed.”

In a career that spanned more than 60 years, Cunningham determined steps by chance —

saying it freed his imagination — and shattered unwritten rules such as the need for dancers to face the audience and keep time with the music.

Reacting to his death, the great New York City Ballet dancer Jacques d’Amboise said Monday that Cunningham “made everybody rethink what is dance: Is it just movement to time? Does it have to be synchronized? Can it be improvised? Can it be spontaneous? He played with all these ideas.”

Dancer Judith Jamison called him “a true giant and groundbreaker ... (who) shifted dancer’s horizons and audience perceptions throughout the world.”

Cunningham worked closely with composer John Cage, his longtime partner who died in 1992, and with visual artists such as Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns.

But, he said, “I am and always have been fascinated by dancing, and I can just as well

do a dance without the visual thing.”

Other choreographers have made plotless dances but Cunningham did his even without music. The audience got both dance and music, but the steps weren’t done to the music’s beat, and sometimes the dancers were hearing the music for the first time on stage.

While Cunningham used chance — tossing pennies or whatever — during the creative process, his dancers had to follow the finished work precisely.

His dances may have been nontraditional, but the intricate choreography wasn’t easy to do, and his dancers were all highly trained. Cunningham himself continued to dance with his company well into his 70s.

Among his creations — more than 150 in all: “Sounddance,” 1975; “RainForest,” 1968; “Septet,” 1953; “Exchange,” 1978; “Trackers,” 1991; “Pictures,” 1984; “Fabrications,” 1987; “Cargo X,” 1989; and “Biped,” 1999.

“Merce saw beauty in the ordinary, which is what made him extraordinary,” said Trevor Carlson, executive director of the Cunningham Dance Foundation. “He did not allow convention to lead him, but was a true artist, honest and forthcoming in everything he did.”

Though he had to use a wheelchair in later years, he premiered a long piece called “Nearly Ninety” as he reached that age milestone in April. It was set to new music from Led Zeppelin’s John Paul Jones, the rock band Sonic Youth, and Japanese composer Takehisa Kosugi.

He also had recently set up a new organization, the Merce Cunningham Trust, and planned that his dance company would have a final, two-year tour and then shut down. Meanwhile, the Cunningham Trust would preserve his choreography for future artists, scholars and audiences

“My idea has always been to explore human physical

movement,” Cunningham said in June. “I would like the Trust to continue doing this, because dancing is a process that never stops, and should not stop if it is to stay alive and fresh.”

Among the honors that came his way over a long career were the Kennedy Center Honors, 1985, and the National Medal of Arts, 1990.

“I think the things in my earlier work that were shocking, like shifting abruptly, no longer are shocking,” he said in 1986.

Said The New York Times: “Cunningham has altered the audience’s very perception of what constitutes a dance performance and explored previously inconceivable methods of putting movement together.”

Such works, combined with far-out music, could be tough going for audiences used to more

traditional dances.

A critic for Britain’s Financial Times, after watching the premiere of Cunningham’s “Ocean” in Brussels in 1994, wrote: “How slowly time passes when the avant-garde is having fun.” But Time magazine said, “The public and dance critics alike were seduced by ‘Ocean’s’ magical marine universe.”

The 90-minute work featured 15 dancers performing on a round stage, with the audience seated around them. Cunningham used a computer — he was a pioneer in its use in choreography — to keep track of how the work would look from many different angles.

“I told the dancers, ‘You have to put yourself on a merry-go-round and keep turning round and round because no single moment is fixed in any particular direction,’” he said. □

Jackson honored in Austria



‘Save the World Award’ winner 2009 Jermaine Jackson, left and his sons Jaffar Jackson, back, and Jermajesty Jackson, front, presents the Save the World Award in Zwentendorf near Vienna, Austria, on Friday, July 24, 2009. The award is said to be the first global prize honoring people and organizations who campaign for the preservation of the world.

(AP Photo/Ronald Zak)

Stocks edge higher on mixed signs about economy



FILE - In this July 9, 2009 file photo, traders await the natural gas inventory numbers at the New York Mercantile Exchange in New York. Critics say federal regulators have long let speculation in energy markets inflict financial pain: triggering wild price swings, hurting gasoline wholesalers, damaging airlines and squeezing consumers. Now, in a major shift, regulators are considering imposing quantity limits on speculative trading of energy futures contracts.

(AP Photo/Yanina Manolova, file)

By TIM PARADIS,
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK — Investors are still building on a stock market rally even when the news isn't all great.

Stocks edged higher Monday after zigzagging in subdued trading on mixed economic and corporate earnings reports.

The Dow Jones industrial average rose only 15 points. But modest moves in the market's indicators belie larger forces at work: Investors aren't dumping stocks, even in the face of downbeat news.

Disappointing earnings from

Verizon Communications Inc., Aetna Inc. and Corning Inc. kept the market's gains in check, adding another pause to a powerful rally that has sent major indexes rocketing 11 percent in just two weeks.

RadioShack Corp. reported higher second-quarter earnings that beat forecasts, but mainly from cost-cutting — a theme that has become familiar this earnings season and has left many investors disappointed.

Stocks are steady in part because many investors aren't retreating for fear of missing another rally. Even

earlier this month, when a spring rally was still stalled, investors likely would have looked to the news out Monday as reason to sell.

On the plus side, a government report showed new home sales posted the fastest increase in June in more than eight years as buyers jumped on reduced prices, low interest rates and a federal tax credit for first-time homeowners. That sent stocks of home builders surging.

Analysts said the market's modest moves were a good sign. Brian F. Reynolds, chief market strategist at WJB Capital Group, said investors were surprised by the strength of corporate earnings reports in the past two weeks.

"After a run of any direction stocks take a little break and people kind of catch their breath," Reynolds said. "I think that's especially true now because people were caught off guard. I think so many people were so bearish."

The Dow rose 15.27, or 0.2 percent, to 9,108.51, its first finish above the 9,100 mark since Nov. 5. The blue chips crossed zero 27 times during trading but spent almost the entire day with a loss. The Dow has been up 10 of the

past 11 trading days.

The broader Standard & Poor's 500 index rose 2.92, or 0.3 percent, to 982.18, while the Nasdaq composite index rose 1.93, or 0.1 percent, to 1,967.89.

Nearly two stocks rose for every one that fell on the New York Stock Exchange, where volume came to 1 billion shares, essentially flat with Friday.

Bond prices fell, pushing yields higher, ahead of a busy week of Treasury auctions. The yield on the benchmark 10-year Treasury note rose to 3.73 percent from 3.66 percent late Friday.

In economic news, the Commerce Department said new home sales rose 11 percent in June to 384,000, beating analysts' estimates. The median price of \$206,200 was down 12 percent from a year earlier and off nearly 6 percent from May. Last week, stocks got a lift from a better-than-expected rise in sales of existing homes.

Among companies posting results, Verizon's second-quarter earnings fell 21 percent. Cost reductions at the nation's largest wireless carrier failed to keep pace with falling revenue.

Aetna's profit skidded 28

percent on higher medical expenses in its commercial business, and the health insurer cut its profit forecast for the second time in two months. The stock fell 72 cents, or 2.7 percent, to \$25.72.

Corning said its second-quarter earnings tumbled from results inflated by a big one-time gain a year ago. The stock fell 50 cents, or 2.9 percent, to \$16.50.

RadioShack fell \$1.06, or 6.6 percent, to \$15 after cost-cutting drove profit growth and sales fell short of analysts' expectations.

Among homebuilders, Lennar Corp. rose 76 cents, or 6.8 percent, to \$11.87 and Beazer Homes USA Inc. jumped 36 cents, or 13.9 percent, to \$2.95.

Investors have been buying stocks as companies from AT&T Inc. to chip maker Intel Corp. post earnings that are stronger than analysts had predicted. However some analysts remain cautious because expectations have been low.

"Last week was dubbed as a good earnings week, but good compared to what?" asked David Hefty, CEO of Cornerstone Wealth Management in Auburn, Ind. "It doesn't take a lot to get the market excited these days."

The dollar was mixed against other major currencies, while gold prices rose.

Crude oil rose 33 cents to settle at \$68.38 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

The Russell 2000 index of smaller companies rose 2.42, or 0.4 percent, to 550.88.

Overseas, Japan's Nikkei stock average rose 1.5 percent. Britain's FTSE 100 rose 0.2 percent, Germany's DAX index rose 0.4 percent, and France's CAC-40 rose 0.2 percent. □



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Starbucks to match 401k but health benefits costlier



Starbucks signs are seen outside one of its stores in New York July 3, 2008.

By Lisa Baertlein

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Starbucks Corp will make discretionary matching contributions to 401(k) retirement plans for its 2009 plan year but employees will face higher health-care costs, Chief Executive Howard Schultz said in a memo to employees on Monday. Starbucks, known for its generous health-care benefits, said those costs have risen sharply over the past several years on skyrocketing U.S. health care expenses. In the memo, Schultz said the company now spends “almost as much on health

REUTERS/Chip East

care for our partners as we do on the green coffee we buy.”

Last week, Starbucks reported better-than-expected quarterly profits as it began reaping rewards from slashing costs and closing stores.

“We are encouraged by the progress we’re making in our business during a time of economic challenge and change in our business,” Schultz said.

As a result, the company has decided to make the discretionary 401(k) match payments for 2009 and to fund merit increases for some workers.

The coffee chain warned

employees late last year that it would not guarantee making those contributions for 2009, and that it was switching to a “fully discretionary match” program from a fixed employer match.

“It’s no secret, however, that health care costs in the U.S. continue to increase significantly, making it difficult for companies to sustain the health coverage they offer employees. Starbucks is not immune to these increases,” Schultz said. Next year the company’s most economical, basic health plan will be available for \$20 a paycheck, up from \$12.50 per paycheck currently, a spokeswoman said. Given the rising costs, employees will generally see higher increases to their health care contributions than in recent years, Schultz said. Starbucks said there will be no changes made to health care coverage eligibility requirements, which are more generous than those of other major retailers. Starbucks shares edged down 3 cent to \$17.19 late Monday afternoon on Nasdaq. □

Plum Creek 2Q profit up slightly on one-time gain

SEATTLE — Plum Creek Timber Co., a real estate investment trust, said Monday its second-quarter net income rose slightly as it benefited from a \$23 million gain stemming from the sale of Wisconsin timberland.

For the April to June period, Seattle based-company had net income of \$32 million, or 19 cents a share, compared with net income of \$31 million, or 18 cents a share, in the year-ago quarter.

The most recent results reflect a \$23 million gain, or 14 cents a share, on the sale of 59,000 acres in Wisconsin. In the year-ago quarter, Plum Creek reported a \$6 million after-tax charge related to its manufacturing business.

Revenue fell 28 percent to \$272 million from \$376 million in the second quarter of 2008.

Analysts surveyed by Thomson Reuters had forecast, on average, earnings of 2 cents a share on revenue of \$227.3 million. Analyst estimates typically exclude one-time items. Rick Holley, president and chief executive officer, said the results were better than they expected because of the closure of some manufacturing operations and higher sales.

In the first six months, Plum Creek reported net income of \$189 million, or \$1.15 a share, compared with net income of \$69 million, or 40 cents a share, in the year-ago period. Revenue totaled \$742 million, up from \$739 million.

Plum Creek forecast earnings of 5 cents to 10 cents a share for the third quarter and earnings of between \$1.25 and \$1.40 a share for the full year.

Plum Creek released its results after the market closed. Shares of Plum Creek rose 82 cents, or 2.5 percent, to close Monday at \$33.17. □

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The escalation of US war plans in Latin America PT 2.

by Rick Rozoff

Nine Years Later: Drug War Charade Gives Way To Naked Counterinsurgency

The escalation of counterinsurgency operations was packaged under the label of a war against drugs, of course. Nine years later Colombia remains the largest supplier of cocaine and heroin to the United States.

How seriously one should have taken this charade was indicated in April of 2000 when the former commander of the U.S. Army's anti-drug operation in Colombia, Col. James C. Hiett, pleaded guilty to not having turned over evidence on his wife, Laurie, for smuggling cocaine and heroin into the United States. His spouse pleaded guilty in January of planning to smuggle \$700,000 worth of heroin into the US through the mail.

Colonel Hiett doubtlessly performed his duties in propagating the tale that the FARC was responsible for the lion's share of coca and opium cultivation and trafficking in the nation and that the US military was the best response to its alleged activities.

If one still had any doubts regarding the sincerity of American claims to be combating narco-trafficking and terrorism, within weeks of the passage of Plan Colombia Secretary of State Albright escorted the head of the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army, Hashim Thaci, whose colleagues and allied drug cartels control most of the marijuana, hashish and narcotics traffic in Europe, to her old haunts in the United Nations Headquarters and her then current ones in the State Department, preparing him to become a future head of state. (Since last year he is in fact the president of what former Serbian president Vojislav Kostunica has aptly called the world's first NATO state. It is also the world's newest narco-state.)

After the events of September 11, 2001 in the United States the White House elevated the FARC towards the top of its targets list in the so-called Global War on Terror, though what role the group could have

had in the attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C. is beyond any sane person's ability to discern or fathom.

By 2002 the Bush administration had discarded most of the drug war rationale and "Congress approved a law to allow American military aid to Colombia to be used in a 'unified campaign' against drugs and terrorism" and by 2008 "six years and \$5-billion later, the Colombian military is Latin America's most skilled fighting force." [9]

American "Special Operations training provided many of the skills that showed 'the way to open the door to these remote jungle locations that were in the past inaccessible to the Colombian government.'

"Military units including Special Forces and an elite Commando Brigade were created. Eight regional intelligence units were set up with reconnaissance airplanes, and state-of-the-art air-to-ground communications. An Intelligence School was created, as well as a Counter Intelligence Center." [10]

Days before leaving office George W. Bush awarded Colombian President Alvaro Uribe, who rumors have linked to the former Medellin drug cartel and whose brother Santiago is accused of narco-trafficking and death squad connections, the Medal of Freedom.

Perhaps anticipating the honor and paying back the person most responsible for Plan Colombia and the increased military operations both within Colombia's borders and outside the country, Alvaro Uribe announced that he was conferring the "Colombia is Passion" award on Bill Clinton "at a gala event...in New York City" for "for believing in our country and encouraging others to do the same."

"Prominent Democrats on the guest list include former Clinton strategists Dick Morris and Vernon Jordan, former Clinton Cabinet members Lawrence Summers and Madeleine Albright, and several Democratic congressmen," most of whom presumably had the political survival skills not to attend.

[11]

Earlier the same year "On the eve of a visit by U.S. President George W. Bush" and with no further pretense of a drug war "U.S. and Colombian soldiers arrived in the southern town of Cartagena del Chaira, a FARC stronghold, by helicopter...."

[12]

As the narcotics issue has been downplayed, so the human rights component of Plan Colombia has been relegated to the realm of short-lived public relations manipulation. In February of 2007 Colombian Foreign Minister Maria Consuelo Araujo's brother, Senator Alvaro Araujo, was arrested for connections to the paramilitary United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC).

Uribe was untroubled by the above and said, "When they ask, why do I keep the foreign minister, I answer: She is not involved in the criminal activities that are under investigation." [13]

Plan Colombia has entered its tenth calendar year. In the intervening years covert and overt government and paramilitary massacres, many too grisly to relate, have continued unabated and drug cultivation and exports have been, if marginally dented, not substantially affected by what is still referred to when convenient as a drug eradication program.

Drug war claims notwithstanding, Plan Colombia's activities both within and outside the nation were actuated by other designs.

Colombia: Pentagon's Base In Andean Region

From its very advent it was intended to be more than an intensification of the decades-old counterinsurgency war in Colombia and to be the opening salvo of a US campaign to escalate the militarization of the Andes region. White House and Pentagon plans to employ Colombia as a regional military force and operating base to police South America have gained new urgency for Washington with political transformations in Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Argentina



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and Paraguay heralding the end of US political, economic and military domination of the continent.

In its first full year of existence, 2001, a Peruvian Air Force jet shot down a civilian plane spotted by a US aircraft flown by CIA contractors with American missionary Veronica Bowers and her infant daughter on board, killing both as well as the pilot.

By 2006 the US had doubled the amount of military trainers and advisers stationed in Colombia and in the same year the nation's planes started violating the air space of neighboring Ecuador. The planes, and it would not have been unusual for US personnel to have been aboard them, were ostensibly conducting fumigation missions.

The Ecuadoran government denounced the actions as "unfriendly and hostile" and "Defense Minister Marcelo Delgado said...that army airplanes will fly over its border to prevent Colombian airplanes from entering Ecuadorian airspace...." [14]

In December of 2006 not only Colombian planes crossed the border into the country. Later in the month "Some 40 Colombians...fled across the border into Ecuador after they were attacked by Colombian soldiers," the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Ecuador reported. [15]

Twelve months before fifteen Colombians were killed and 1,500 displaced in the Narilo

province in the country's southeast, bordering Ecuador.

"Authorities remained silent as to whether this was a military operation against guerrilla fighters or a dispute between paramilitary groups." [16]

In early 2007 Marine Gen. Peter Pace, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, traveled to Colombia and spent two days meeting with the country's military and political leadership. Shortly afterwards Colombian Defense Minister Juan Manuel Santos, about whom more will be said later, returned the favor and visited the Pentagon where he met with US Defense Secretary Robert Gates. A Defense Department report of the visit quoted Pentagon officials as saying that "U.S. military support for Colombia, previously focused on combating drugs, has expanded to helping the Colombian military confront the country's rebel insurgency" and that "U.S. Special Forces troops in Colombia provide Colombian forces military training..." [17]

Five months later Colombia built a third military base on its 2,219 kilometer border with Venezuela, initially stationing 1,000 troops in it.

Colombia has become a military outpost for Washington in confronting and threatening both Ecuador on its southwestern and Venezuela on its northeastern frontiers.

It is also part of a strategy that is more than regional and even continental in nature and scope. □

Sunset Grille, a prime Steakhouse offering Spa Cuisine



Palm Beach – The Sunset Grille at the Radisson Aruba Resort Casino & Spa needs no introduction. The award winning American steakhouse with its chic, cosmopolitan atmosphere headlines Prime Beef, the highest grade U.S.D.A -- only 2% of all beef is graded prime, required to age a minimum of 4 weeks. While steaks and chops make up the heart of the menu, the resort's Restaurant Chef Maarten Smeets innovated

unparalleled appetizers and extraordinary desserts, which helped the Sunset Grille achieve the Triple AAA's elite four-diamond status – a rare feat for steakhouses. Sunset Grille well-known as the number one steakhouse in Aruba offers also spa cuisine, for the health conscious visitors, featuring appetizers, salads and a wide array of seafood selections. The spa cuisine dishes are balanced by enhancing

flavors with citrus, spice and herbs and taste is elevated by marinating, smoking and grilling, Smeets explains. "We now use many more herbs, vegetables, grains and fibers," he adds, "all designed to sustain a healthier life style; and we stay away from saturated fats and refined sugars, as well as use salt sparingly," he informs. "The Sunset Grille kitchen," Smeets reveals, "uses no trans fats, and our guests," he banter, "stay healthy, wealthy and wise with our new and exciting spa cuisine." Among the patrons favorite dishes are, the Sunset Grille's famous Chop House Martini Salad, "Shaken not Stirred," the lobster bisque with a pastry crust, the various cuts of prime beef, the popular Rack of Lamb, Stuffed Quail and the delicious Veal Oscar. The spa cuisine features items such as Tuna Tataki, the Spinach Salad, Chilean Seabass, grilled Swordfish and the Asian style Salmon



to cut corners, especially when it comes to buying, aging and cutting meat. No wonder the readers of Caribbean Travel & Life named it the top restaurant in the Caribbean. □



Life's a Beach at the Juggling Fish

Palm Beach -- The Juggling Fish at Playa Linda Beach Resort is designed to stimulate your shopping instincts, as the beautiful store is hard to resist. What you'll find on the oceanfront boardwalk is absolutely gorgeous: hand picked gifts, souvenirs, beach

and resort wear, it's all on display a few steps from the water. The tastefully arranged store is signature Boston-born Jodi Tobman, also the owner of the brand-new Lazy Lizard, in the South Beach Centre. You will find a great selection of

kid gifts here. In fact an entire inner section is dedicated to gifts with a tropical appeal for babies and toddlers, among them whimsical plush stuffed iguanas, parrots and seahorses. Moreover, a bonanza of fridge magnets, hand-made silver jewelry, batik beach



wraps, throws and hats also awaits you. Gift hunters will be pleased with the array of scented candles and candleholders. The store offers convenient barefoot browsing possibilities and is located within a short walking distance from the Hyatt Regency and the Holiday Inn Sunspree Resort. The Juggling Fish at Playa Linda fits nicely into that resort's "Life's a Beach" philosophy. Open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday and on Sunday, when the rest of the island is at a standstill, the helpful staff at the Juggling Fish Playa

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with granite counter tops and a full stainless steel appliance package including washer and dryer. This 35-condominium complex will feature a beautiful swimming pool with a beach style entry with waterfalls and fountain and state of the art fiber optic lighting. The entrance of the building has a drive-up covered entrance and an elegant two-story lobby leading to the sun-filled hallways and corridors. The common area will facilitate the owners with a well-equipped gym overlooking the gardens and the pool.

The garden will feel like an oasis true to the projects name. There will also be a recreation room and sofas throughout the common area to lounge and relax. Further amenities include a 24/7 security, a full concierge and a rental program for the owners who want to earn a return on their investment. The concierge service will be helpful to assist the owners in making their 'homecoming' a very pleasant return. Each condo will have one designated parking space exclusive to the owners. Construction on Oasis at Eagle

Beach is moving fast. Fifteen of the thirty five units have already been sold. The condominiums will be ready for occupancy by March 2010. Oasis is located on Eagle Beach which allows for an easy access, even on foot, to the best casinos, restaurants, golf courses, shopping areas and night life the Aruba has to offer. The experienced sales team of Oasis invites you for a visit to learn about this new gem on the beach.

The site tour will take you up in the complex where you will enjoy spectacular views of the ocean and beach as well as a wonderful view of Oranjestad where the cruise ships are docked. The views from the rooftop terrace are stunning to say the least. The Oasis sales team is ready to assist you.

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House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of Calif., center, flanked by House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Rep. Charles Rangel, D-N.Y., left, and House Education and Labor Committee Chairman Rep. George Miller, D-Calif., gestures during a news conference on health care reform, Friday, July 17, 2009, on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

AP sources: Senate group omits employer mandate

By DAVID ESPO

AP Special Correspondent

WASHINGTON — After weeks of secretive talks, a bipartisan group in the Senate edged closer Monday to a health care compromise that omits two key Democratic priorities but incorporates provisions to slow the explosive rise in medical costs, officials said.

These officials said participants were on track to exclude a requirement many congressional Democrats seek for businesses to offer coverage to their workers. Nor would there be a provision for a government insurance option, despite President Barack Obama's support for such a plan.

The three Democrats and three Republicans from the Senate Finance Committee were considering a tax of as much as 35 percent on very high-cost insurance policies, part of an attempt to rein in rapid escalation of costs. Also likely to be included in any deal was creation of a commission charged with slowing the growth of Medicare through recommendations that would take effect automatically unless overturned by Congress.

"We're going to get agreement here," Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont., the Finance Committee chairman, said Monday. "The group of six really wants to get to 'yes.'"

Obama has outlined two broad goals for legislation he is struggling to win from Congress: expansion of health insurance

coverage to millions who lack it, and reining in increases in costs.

Like bills drafted by Democrats, the proposal under discussion by the six Finance Committee members would bar insurance companies from denying coverage to any applicant. Nor could insurers charge higher premiums on the basis of pre-existing medical conditions.

But it jettisons other core Democratic provisions in a reach for bipartisanship on an issue that has so far produced little.

The effort received a boost during the day from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, normally a close ally of Republicans. In a letter to committee leaders, the business group called for the panel to "act promptly, preferably before" the Senate's scheduled vacation at the end of next week. In doing so, the business organization dealt a blow to the Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky and other GOP lawmakers who have called repeatedly for Democrats to slow down.

In yet another boost for the drive to enact legislation, PhRMA, which represents drug companies, has purchased more than \$500,000 worth of television ads to air during the week in nine states.

Obama's top domestic priority has suffered numerous setbacks in recent weeks, and Republicans have stepped up their criticism.

Continued on Page B4

AP source: Jackson doc gave him drug before death

THOMAS WATKINS

Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Michael Jackson's personal doctor administered a powerful anesthetic to help him sleep, and authorities believe the drug is what killed the pop singer, a law enforcement official told The Associated Press on Monday.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the investigation is ongoing, said Jackson regularly received propofol to sleep, a practice far outside the drug's intended purpose. On June 25, the day Jackson died, Dr. Conrad Murray gave him the drug sometime after midnight, the official said.

Though toxicology reports are pending, investigators are working under the theory that



propofol caused Jackson's heart to stop, the official said. Murray, 51, has been identified in court papers as the subject of a manslaughter investigation and authorities last week raided his office and a storage unit in Houston.

Continued on Page B5



U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates, right, meets with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem Monday, July 27, 2009. Israel dug in its heels Monday in a disagreement with the United States over a potential military strike to thwart Iran's progress toward a possible nuclear weapon, as the visiting American defense chief urged patience.

Associated Press

Israel on Iran: Anything it takes to stop bomb

ANNE GEARAN

AP National Security Writer

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel hardened its insistence Monday that it would do anything it felt necessary to stop Iran from getting a nuclear bomb, just the ultimatum the United States hoped not to hear as it tried to nudge Iran to the bargaining table.

Continued on Page B6

Obama declares new era of cooperation with China

MARTIN CRUTSINGER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON

(AP)

— President Barack Obama declared a new era of “cooperation, not confrontation” with China on Monday, even though two days of high-level talks were not expected to resolve differences over the two nations’ yawning trade gap and China’s unease over soaring U.S. budget deficits. The Obama administration pledged to get control of the deficits once the economic crisis is resolved. It also pressed China to reshape its economy to rely more on domestic demand and less on exports that drive up the U.S. trade deficit.

Chinese Assistant Finance Minister Zhu Guangyao, briefing reporters after Monday’s meetings, said the U.S. and Chinese sides had “profound exchanges” on the recovery of the U.S. economy.

“We sincerely hope the U.S. fiscal deficit will be reduced, year after year,” Zhu said, speaking through an interpreter, after being asked if China was worried about U.S. recovery.

The discussions in Washington represent the continuation of a dialogue begun by the Bush administration, which focused on economic tensions between the two nations. Obama chose to expand the talks to include foreign policy issues as well as economic disputes.

Top officials from both countries have called the relationship crucial to solving many of the world’s crises. The Obama administration hopes the talks can set the groundwork for cooperation on climate change, lifting the world economy out of turmoil and addressing nuclear standoffs with North Korea and Iran.

Both sides sought to underscore the importance of the revamped Strategic and Economic Dialogue, with Obama delivering a major policy address to welcome a sizable Chinese delegation of 150 diplomats.

“I believe that we are poised to make steady progress on some



President Barack Obama welcomes China’s Vice Premier Wang Qishan, center, and State Councilor Dai Bingguo, left, as he opens the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue in Washington, Monday, July 27, 2009. The meetings are expected to expose sharp differences on trade and soaring U.S. budget deficits.

of the most important issues of our times,” Obama told officials from both countries assembled in the vast atrium of the Ronald Reagan Building. “The relationship between the United States and China will shape the 21st century, which makes it as important as any bilateral relationship in the world,” Obama said.

Vice Premier Wang Qishan, China’s top economic policymaker, said his country’s attempts to create a more open economy would help U.S. recovery efforts.

“With the furthering of China’s reform and opening up, China and the United States will have even closer economic cooperation and trade relations and (the) China-U.S. relationship will surely keep moving forward,” Wang said, speaking through an interpreter.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner were leading the U.S. team. The Chinese delegation was led by Chinese State Councilor Dai Bingguo and Wang.

Geithner and Wang both spoke of hopeful signs that the global economy was beginning to emerge from its worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

Geithner said the stimulus

packages put together by Beijing and Washington had made a substantial contribution to fighting the global downturn and represented a milestone in economic cooperation between the two nations.

The United States, the world’s largest economy, accounts for about 22 percent of global output, and China around 7 percent. The combined impact of the massive stimulus programs should make a difference, economists said, in cushioning a recession that appears to be bottoming out in the United States and some other countries.

Geithner traveled to Beijing last month to assure Chinese officials that federal budget deficits, which have ballooned because of government efforts to deal with the recession and stabilize the financial system, would be reined in once those crises have passed.

He said Americans were already moving to boost their personal savings rates. Economists have long argued that is necessary to controlling U.S. trade deficits because it means Americans are not consuming as much in imports from China and other countries.

“We are committed to taking measures to maintaining greater personal saving and to

reducing the federal deficit to a sustainable level by 2013,” Geithner said at the opening session of the talks.

Geithner did not spell out how the administration planned to accomplish those objectives. Many private economists have said the Chinese are right to worry about a U.S. budget deficit that is projected to hit \$1.85 trillion this year, four-times the previous record, and under the administration’s estimates will not dip below \$500 billion over the next decade.

The Chinese, who have the largest foreign holdings of U.S. Treasury debt at \$801.5 billion, have expressed worries that soaring deficits could spark inflation or a sudden drop in the value of the dollar, thus jeopardizing their investments. Zhu told reporters, “The Chinese government is a responsible government, and first and foremost our responsibility is the Chinese people, so of course we are concerned about the security of the Chinese assets.”

The United States played down the issue of China’s currency, the yuan, which American manufacturers contend is being kept at artificially low levels by Beijing to gain trade advantages against the United

States.

Both sides are trying to emphasize areas of agreement, in part to avoid upsetting global financial markets during a period of stress for the world economy.

Geithner did say that it would be a “huge contribution to more rapid, balanced and sustained global growth” if China shifted toward more domestic-led growth and away from the current extensive reliance on exports.

While Chinese officials have pledged to move in this direction, it was unclear that the changes would be fast enough or substantial enough to satisfy U.S. demands.

The two nations are the world’s largest emitters of the pollution blamed for global warming, but so far China has resisted calls to set specific caps on emissions or to eliminate tariffs on clean energy technology that the United States and other countries would like to sell them. The administration did praise China for its help in the nuclear standoff with North Korea. Clinton said the United States and China must work together to stop North Korean “provocations.” She said both countries “appreciate the dangers of escalating tensions” and a possible arms race in East Asia.

While the U.S. trade deficit with China has narrowed slightly this year, it is still the largest imbalance with any country. Critics in Congress say unless China does much more in the currency area, they will seek to pass legislation to impose economic sanctions on Beijing, a move that could spark a trade war.

Dai said the countries must work together to help solve the world’s problems.

Speaking through an interpreter, he noted that the countries are trying to build better relations despite their very different social systems, cultures and histories.

“Can we manage to do that? My answer is, we must work hard to make it happen, and, yes, we can—that is borrowed from President Obama.” He added in English: “Yes, we can!” □

Associated Press

US jury favors hospital that deported immigrant

LAURA WIDES-MUNOZ

Associated Press Writer

MIAMI (AP) — A hospital that sent a seriously brain injured illegal immigrant back to Guatemala — over the objections of his family and legal guardian — did not act unreasonably, a jury found Monday.

Deputy Court Clerk Carol Harper said the unanimous 6-member jury found in favor of the hospital and against the guardian of 37-year-old Luis Jimenez, a Mayan Indian from Guatemala.

Health care and immigration experts across the country have closely watched the court case in the sleepy, coastal town of Stuart. The hospital had cared for Jimenez, who was uninsured, for three years. But it was unable to find any nursing home to take him permanently because his immigration status meant the government would not reimburse his care.

"Hospitals are not intended to become long-term housing," said Linda Quick, president of the South Florida Hospital & Healthcare Association. "The issue is that there are no long-term providers required to take people for whom they know they are not going to be paid."

She said that as a result of

the case, hospitals will likely begin planning for discharge as soon as they admit patients they suspect cannot pay and could require long-term care.

The lawsuit filed by Jimenez's cousin and legal guardian sought nearly \$1 million to cover the estimated lifetime costs of Jimenez's care in Guatemala, as well as damages.

The hospital said it was merely following a court order — which was being appealed at the time — and that Jimenez wanted to go home.

Gaspar's attorney Bill King said he was extremely disappointed with the ruling and was reviewing all options including whether to appeal.

"There is no doubt that the state government and the federal government has to address the situation," he said. "They can't let something like this happen again."

Martin Memorial Medical Center's CEO and president Mark E. Robitaille said in a statement the hospital was pleased with the ruling.

"We have maintained all along that we acted correctly and, most importantly, in the best interests of Mr. Jimenez," Robitaille said.

But he agreed lawmakers must step in to ensure hospitals are not put in the same position in the future.

"This is not simply an issue facing Martin Memorial. It is a critical dilemma facing health care providers across Florida and across the United States," he added.

Robitaille, who was not yet head of the hospital when Jimenez was sent back to Guatemala, said he was concerned that none of the health care reform proposals being debated in Congress address the issue.

Like millions of others, Jimenez came to the United States to work as a day laborer, sending money home to his family. In 2000, a drunk driver crashed into a van he was riding in, leaving him a paraplegic with the cognitive ability of a fourth grader. The man who caused the accident — which killed two people — was driving a stolen van. An insurance policy ended up paying a total of \$30,000 in compensation to Jimenez and the families of the three other victims.

Jimenez's cousin, Montejo Gaspar, was named his legal guardian because of his brain injury.

Under federal law, hospitals that receive Medicare



In this July 13, 2003 file photo, Luis Alberto Ramirez, rests in the Orthopedic General Hospital following his deportation from Florida to Guatemala, in Guatemala City. A jury has found a South Florida hospital that chartered a plane and sent Ramirez back to Guatemala over the objections of his family did not act unreasonably, an attorney for the man's legal guardian said Monday, July 27, 2009.

Associated Press

reimbursements are required to provide emergency care to all patients regardless of their ability to pay and must provide an acceptable discharge plan once the patient is stabilized. But the hospital couldn't find anyone to take Jimenez. Eventually, backed by a letter from the Guatemalan government, the hospital got a Florida judge to OK the transfer to a facility in that country. Fearing the Guatemalan letter held an empty promise, Gaspar appealed. But without telling Jimenez's family — and the day after Gaspar filed an emergency request to stop the move — Martin Memorial put Jimenez on a \$30,000 charter flight home early on July 10, 2003.

Gaspar eventually won his appeal, with the court ruling

a state judge doesn't have the power to decide immigration cases and that Jimenez should not have been sent back. By then, Jimenez had been released from the Guatemalan hospital and was living with his 73-year-old mother in her remote one-room home in the mountainous state of Huehuetenango.

King said he believed some good had come from bringing both the initial appeal and the most recent case.

"We've shown that state judges cannot authorize what is tantamount to private deportation of undocumented immigrants, and that hospitals have to follow the federal requirements that are in place for the discharge of all people, including undocumented immigrants," he said. □

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Thursday, June 25, 2009 file photo shows Sen. Jim Bunning, R-Ky. as he meets with Supreme Court nominee Sonia Sotomayor on Capitol Hill in Washington. Bunning said Monday, July 27, 2009 that he will not run for a third term in 2010, citing a lack of campaign money.

Associated Press

EMPLOYER MANDATE

Continued from Page B1

A Senate vote has been postponed until September. Administration and Democratic leaders hope to show significant progress before lawmakers begin their monthlong recess in hopes of regaining momentum.

In the House, the leadership sought to allay concerns among the rank and file. Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said, "We're on schedule to do it now or do it whenever," when asked whether the House would complete its bill before lawmakers leave at the end of the week for their summer break.

In the Senate, officials stressed that no agreement has been reached on a bipartisan measure, and said there is no guarantee of one. They also warned that numerous key issues remain to be settled, including several options to pay for the legislation. They spoke on condition of anonymity, saying they were not authorized to discuss matters under private negotiations.

They said any legislation that emerges from the talks is expected to provide for a nonprofit cooperative to sell insurance in competition with private industry, rather than giving the federal government a role in the marketplace.

Obama and numerous Democrats in Congress have called for a government option to provide competition to private companies and hold

down costs. White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said during the day, "I don't believe that the president has come down (on) one versus the other in terms of denoting co-ops equal to or above public option."

One of the senators involved in the talks, Olympia Snowe, R-Maine, confirmed that co-ops are the preferred approach. "It's safe to say that it'll probably remain in the final document," she said.

Officials also said a bipartisan compromise would not subject companies to a penalty if they declined to offer coverage to their workers. Instead, these businesses would be required to reimburse the government for part or all of any federal subsidies designed to help lower-income employees obtain insurance on their own.

"We don't want to undermine (employer coverage) or create a perverse incentive where employers potentially drop coverage because their employees can get subsidies," Snowe said.

Democratic-drafted legislation in the House includes both a penalty and a requirement for companies to share in the cost of covering employees.

The senators involved in the negotiations are all members of the Senate Finance Committee, and include Baucus and Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, the senior Republican. Others participating are Democratic

Vulnerable Republican quits race

JOE BIESK

MARY CLARE JALONICK

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Republican senator considered by his party as the most vulnerable to defeat in the 2010 U.S. elections announced Monday he will not run for a third term, citing a lack of campaign money.

In a statement Sen. Jim Bunning, 77, blamed fellow Senate Republicans for doing "everything in their power to dry up my fundraising."

In addition, Bunning and fellow Kentucky Sen. Mitch McConnell have traded barbs for months. McConnell is the Senate Republican leader and he has made it clear he would like his colleague to retire.

Bunning, who was a professional baseball pitcher before he entered politics, declined to endorse a candidate in the Republican primary, but said he is certain the seat will stay in

Republican hands.

The latest election filings show that from April through June, Bunning raised less than half the total funds of Kentucky Secretary of State Trey Grayson, a 37-year-old potential Republican primary candidate.

In the statement, Bunning, first elected to Congress in 1986, said to win a general election, a candidate has to be able to raise millions of dollars for advertising and campaign events.

"Over the past year, some of the leaders of the Republican Party in the Senate have done everything in their power to dry up my fundraising," Bunning said in the statement.

"The simple fact is that I have not raised the funds necessary to run an effective campaign for the U.S. Senate." Grayson has raised more than \$600,000 for his exploratory committee. Bunning has \$595,000 on hand but has been raising money since 2005. □



Henry Waxman, D-Calif., speaks after he and other Blue Dog Democrats met with President Barack Obama Tuesday, July 21, 2009, at the White House in Washington. Listening from left are, Rep. Mike Ross, D-Ark., left, Rep. Baron Hill, D-Ind., Waxman, Rep. Frank Pallone, D-N.J., and Rep. Bart Gordon, D-Tenn.

Associated Press

Sens. Kent Conrad of North Dakota and Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico, and Republicans Snowe and Mike Enzi of Wyoming.

They have met for hours in recent weeks in Baucus' office, joined by aides and outside advisers such as actuaries summoned to explain arcane details of insurance. Douglas Elmendorf, head of the Congressional Budget Office, has also attended.

Baucus has been under intense pressure from the White House and Senate Democrats in recent weeks to convene the committee to vote out legislation. He has so far declined to do so, opting to give the bipartisan negotiations as much time as needed to succeed.

Several Democratic officials have said he recently pledged to Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., that the committee would meet next week to vote on legislation, a timetable that implies time is growing short for the bipartisan group to wrap up its work.

Much of the cost of the proposal would come from curbing the growth in fees to insurance companies and other providers under Medicare.

But congressional aides in both parties as well as lobbyists said a proposal limiting Flexible Savings Accounts to \$2,000 annually is also a strong possibility. FSAs permit the use of pretax income to pay for items such as health care and child care. Negotiators also are

considering fees on the manufacturers of medical devices and on the makers of both brand name and generic drugs coming onto the market.

To cut down on the cost of the bill, the bipartisan group may include only one year of a long-term plan to adjust reimbursement fees under Medicare.

Officials said the legislation under discussion in a series of private meetings would likely cost under \$1 trillion, include an expansion of Medicaid, and provide federal subsidies for individuals and families up to 300 percent of poverty to spread health care more broadly. Individuals would have a mandate to buy affordable insurance. □

American al-Qaida sentenced to life for Bush assassin plot

MATTHEW BARAKAT

Associated Press Writer

ALEXANDRIA, Virginia (AP) — A U.S. man who became an al-Qaida terrorist while attending college in Saudi Arabia and plotted to assassinate then-President George W. Bush was defiant Monday as he was sentenced to life in prison. An appeals court had overturned the original 30-year sentence for Ahmed Omar Abu Ali, 28, who was born in Houston and grew up in the Washington suburb of Falls Church. He was convicted in 2005 of joining al-Qaida while studying in Saudi Arabia in 2002.

Abu Ali met with top al-Qaida leaders in Saudi Arabia and discussed establishing a sleeper cell in the United States.

"I would like to remind you that you too will appear before the divine tribunal with me and everyone else," he said in a brief statement to U.S. District Judge Gerald Bruce Lee. "That day there will be no lawyers ... If you are comfortable with that, you can decree what you

will."

Last year, the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond ordered a new sentencing hearing, saying Lee's original sentence was too lenient.

The appeals court ruled Lee was off the mark in comparing Abu Ali's case to that of "American Taliban" John Walker Lindh, who made a plea deal and was sentenced to 20 years. The appeals court said Abu Ali's conduct was far worse — he joined al-Qaida after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, while Lindh joined prior to them, and Abu Ali specifically sought to attack the U.S., while Lindh only sought to fight in Afghanistan.

Lee said Monday the new sentence takes into account that Abu Ali has never renounced al-Qaida or terrorist activities, and that he could be a threat to the American public if released. Abu Ali has been in solitary confinement at a federal prison in Florence, Colo.

"There's no way to know what his mental state would be after 30 years of solitary confinement," Lee said.

Abu Ali appeared in court in a prison jumpsuit and with long, slicked-back black hair and a beard. He repeated claims that he was tortured by Saudi authorities into giving a confession.

"This was a case manufactured by the Saudi torture regime and expedited to the United States for trial," he said.

Lee said he had held a lengthy hearing to decide whether Abu Ali's videotaped confession should be thrown out and the judge, a jury and an appeals court all concluded it was voluntary.

Abu Ali received training to carry out the assassination plot and other terrorist acts, according to testimony. He was arrested by Saudi authorities during a crackdown on al-Qaida there in 2003.

Abu Ali was valedictorian of a private Islamic high school in Falls Church and he has received significant support from segments of the region's Muslim community. At Monday's hearing, Lee pointed to a folder stuffed with letters

MICHEAL JACKSON

Continued from Page B1

Police say Murray is cooperating and have not labeled him a suspect.

Murray's lawyer, Edward Chernoff, has said the doctor "didn't prescribe or administer anything that should have killed Michael Jackson." When asked Monday about the law enforcement official's statements he said: "We will not be commenting on rumors, innuendo or unnamed sources."

Murray became Jackson's personal physician in May and was to accompany him to London for a series of concerts starting in July. He was staying with Jackson in a rented Los Angeles mansion and, according to Chernoff,

found an unconscious Jackson in the pop star's bedroom the morning of June 25. Murray attempted to revive him but could not.

Police searching Jackson's home after his death found propofol and other drugs, an IV line and three tanks of oxygen in Jackson's bedroom, and 15 more oxygen tanks in a security guard's shack.

Propofol can depress breathing and lower heart rates and blood pressure. Because of the risks, propofol is only supposed to be administered in hospitals. Instructions on the drug's package warn that patients must be continuously monitored, and that equipment to maintain breathing, to provide artificial ventilation, and to administer oxygen if



needed "must be immediately available."

Jackson had trouble sleeping and the official said he enlisted various doctors to administer propofol, relying on the drug like an alarm clock. He would decide what time he wanted to awaken and at the appointed hour a doctor would stop the intravenous drip that delivered the drug, the official said. □



Omar Abu Ali, center, surrounded by supporters and his son's defensive team, exits U.S. District Court in Alexandria, Va., Monday, July 27, 2009 after his son Ahmed Omar Abu Ali was re-sentenced to life in prison for joining al-Qaida and plotting to assassinate then-President George W. Bush, a more severe penalty than the original 30 years he received after his 2005 conviction.

Associated Press

testifying to Abu Ali's good character.

Abu Ali's father, Omar, declined comment after Monday's resentencing.

Defense lawyer Joshua Dratel said he will appeal the sentence. Dratel said he hoped that Abu Ali's statement did not persuade the judge to impose a life sentence.

David Laufman, who as an assistant U.S. attorney prosecuted Abu Ali in

2005 and is now in private practice, questioned whether Abu Ali talked himself into a life sentence at the hearing Monday.

"Abu Ali's utter refusal to express even a scintilla of remorse for his conduct or a repudiation of his association with al-Qaida clearly contributed to the court's determination," Laufman said. "What did come out today was that this is a hard-core jihadist." □

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King Abdullah II of Jordan, right, speaks with U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates, left, during their meeting at the Royal Palace in Amman, Jordan, Monday, July 27, 2009. Gates said Monday the United States will seek much tougher United Nations sanctions on Iran if that nation spurns the offer of talks on its disputed nuclear program.

Associated Press

ISRAEL ON IRAN

Continued from Page B1

U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates reassured Israel that the new Obama administration was not naive about Iran's intentions, and that Washington would press for new, tougher sanctions against the Iranians if they

balk. He didn't say what those might include.

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak used a brief news conference with Gates to insist three times that Israel would not rule out any response — an implied warning that it would consider a pre-emptive strike to thwart Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons.

"We clearly believe that no option should be removed from the table," Barak said. "This is our policy. We mean it. We recommend to others to take the same position, but we cannot dictate it to anyone."

The question of how to deal with Iran's rapid nuclear advancement has become a notable public difference between the new administrations in Jerusalem and Washington, despite overall close relations. Israel considers itself the prime target of any eventual Iranian bomb.

Iran says it is merely trying to develop nuclear reactors for domestic power generation. Israeli leaders fear the U.S. prizes its outreach to Iran over its historic ties to Israel and appears resigned to the idea that Iran will soon be able to build a nuclear weapon.

Obama says he has accepted no such thing. Still, the United States argues that an Israeli attack against Iran would upset the fragile security balance in the Middle East, perhaps triggering a new nuclear arms race and leaving everyone, including Israel and Iran, worse off.

Gates emphasized areas of agreement with Israel, including that the offer of talks with Iran must not be open-ended.

Later, in neighboring Jordan, Gates was blunt in describing what Iran might expect if it refuses the offer of international arms control talks this year, or walks away from Obama's wider offer of better relations with Washington.

"If the engagement process is not successful, the United States is prepared to press for significant additional sanctions," Gates said. He added that the U.S. would try to abandon the current policy of gradual international pressure, where layers of generally mild sanctions have been added

each time Iran has flouted international demands.

"We would try to get international support for a much tougher position," Gates said.

"Our hope remains that Iran would respond to the president's outstretched hand in a positive and constructive way, but we'll see."

Gates' brief stop in Israel was part of a parade of top Washington officials visiting Israel this week, with Iran and the expansion of Jewish settlements on Arab land the main topics. In each case, the Obama administration is taking a harder line with Israel than the positions taken by President George W. Bush.

Obama's special Mideast envoy, former Sen. George Mitchell, was the first U.S. official to arrive, largely to discuss U.S.-Israeli differences over the settlements. Gates will be followed Wednesday by National Security Adviser James Jones and his deputy, Mideast and Iran specialist Dennis Ross, both expected to press for Israeli cooperation on Iran. Gates met with Jordanian King Abdullah II in Amman after leaving Israel on Monday.

Mitchell urged Israel to start "dealing with difficult issues like settlements." At the same time, he urged Arab nations to take "genuine steps" toward normalizing ties with Israel.

The differences over Iran come on top of U.S.-Israeli disagreements over the Mideast peace process — particularly Washington's calls for a halt to Israeli settlement building. The Obama administration is having to press Israel on multiple fronts at once, complicating its diplomacy as it makes a major push to revive Arab-Israeli negotiations.

All this comes at a time when Washington's policy of dialogue with Iran itself has hit an impasse because of that country's election turmoil.

A more cooperative Iran is important for the Mideast peace drive. With its links to Hamas and Hezbollah militants, Iran is capable of heightening tensions in Israel and the Palestinian territories. At the same time, an Israeli strike on Iran would probably push Arab nations away from

any peace gestures toward Israel, despite their own rivalries with Tehran.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "reiterated the seriousness (with) which Israel views Iran's nuclear ambitions and the need to utilize all available means to prevent Iran from achieving a nuclear weapons capability," Netanyahu's office said following his meeting with Gates.

While the United States also reserves the right to use force if need be, the Obama administration is playing down that possibility while it tries to draw Iran into talks. Gates said Washington still hopes to have an initial answer in the fall about negotiations.

"The timetable the president laid out still seems to be viable and does not significantly raise the risks to anybody," Gates said in Israel.

Both Barak and Gates said time is short. Other officials have said Iran is perhaps one to three years away from being able to build a nuclear weapon.

Barak, speaking in both English and Hebrew, gave only lukewarm endorsement to the negotiating strategy.

"We are not in a situation in which we can tell the United States to hold, or not to hold discussions with Iran," Barak said. "But we repeatedly state our position in closed conversations, which is that a discussion like this should be limited in time, result-oriented, and able to decide if the Iranians are truly serious or not."

Itamar Rabinovich, a former Israeli ambassador to the U.S., said Israel "isn't anxious to launch military action."

"It doesn't want this, but Israel thinks more should be done and that diplomacy alone isn't enough. I think Israel and the U.S. are on the same page but on different sides of the paper," he said. □

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Karzai: Afghans want rules for troops changed

KATHY GANNON
ROBERT H. REID

Associated Press Writers

KABUL (AP)—A confident President Hamid Karzai on Monday offered peace talks to Taliban militants if they renounce violence and called for a new relationship with the West if he wins a second term in next month's presidential election.

Karzai is considered the favorite in the Aug. 20 vote. But his chances could hinge on his fellow Pashtuns in the turbulent south and east, where U.S. and British forces this month have suffered some of their highest casualties of the eight-year war.

His only serious competition in the 39-candidate field is believed to be former Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah, who could force a runoff if a low turnout among the Pashtuns, the country's biggest ethnic group and the heart of the Taliban ranks, prevents Karzai from claiming a majority of the votes.

In an interview with The Associated Press in his modest office, Karzai reached out to disaffected Pashtuns, calling for a dialogue with Taliban members who are not affiliated with al-Qaida and who are willing to repudiate violence "and announce that publicly." But the president said he was not yet prepared to discuss the key Taliban demand — a timetable for the withdrawal of all foreign troops — because he contends their continued presence is in the national interest.

"The Afghan people still want a fundamentally strong relation with the United States," Karzai said. "I also know and the Afghan people also know that the presence of international troops in Afghanistan is bringing

stability to Afghanistan."

Nevertheless, Karzai said the U.S. and NATO presence must be based on a partnership where "the partners are not losing their lives, their property, their dignity as a consequence of that partnership."

During the half-hour interview, Karzai appeared relaxed and confident, even joking about his sometimes shaky relationship with the U.S. and its allies. Karzai was once hailed as the salvation of Afghanistan following the ouster of the Taliban in 2001, but over the years his government has been increasingly criticized as weak and corrupt.

"When Hamid Karzai was quiet and there was no trouble between us, Hamid Karzai was a good man," he quipped. "And now that there is a little trouble, he's a bad man."

Karzai's offer of talks with the Taliban was echoed Monday by British Foreign Secretary David Miliband, whose country has lost 22 soldiers this month in Afghanistan. Miliband said in a speech at NATO headquarters that rank-and-file Taliban fighters should be given the opportunity "to leave the path of confrontation with the government."

A Taliban spokesman, Qari Yousef Ahmadi, rejected such talks, saying the militants would not discuss a cease-fire with any government that was a "servant of the foreigners." He urged Afghans not to take part in next month's election.

Afghan authorities have long complained that the Taliban exploit public discontent over the issues of civilian casualties and searches of private homes. Discontent runs highest in Pashtun areas that have

seen most of the fighting since the hardline Islamic movement rebounded from its ouster from power in the U.S.-led invasion of 2001.

The Interior Ministry acknowledges that 10 of the country's 360 districts are not under government control. One-third of the 360 districts are considered high-risk areas, according to the ministry.

U.S. and NATO authorities have recognized the risk of alienating the civilian population.

Soon after assuming command of NATO and U.S. forces last month, Gen. Stanley McChrystal ordered troops to limit the use of airstrikes to prevent civilian casualties. He also ordered that international troops must be accompanied by Afghan forces before entering homes.

During the interview, Karzai also said he wants operations at the U.S.-run prison at Bagram Air Base, where about 600 Afghans are held, re-evaluated and inmates released unless there is evidence linking them to terrorism. He said arrests are turning ordinary Afghans against U.S. and NATO forces.

Instead, both sides should work toward a relationship in which foreign troops show greater sensitivity to Afghan culture and the Afghans display "better management of governmental affairs," Karzai said.

Karzai also the Afghan government was "completely against the mushrooming of private security firms" which played a major role in the Iraq war. U.S. military authorities in Afghanistan are considering hiring a private contractor to provide around-the-clock security at dozens of bases and protect vehicle convoys moving throughout the



Afghan President Hamid Karzai answers questions during an interview with The Associated Press, Monday, July 27, 2009, in Kabul, Afghanistan. Karzai said he wants new rules for U.S.-led forces in his country and is willing to talk with Taliban leaders who publicly renounce violence and support peace.

Associated Press

country.

But Karzai said reliance on private contractors "runs counter to the growth and development of our own institutions" and that the money would be better spent training and equipping Afghanistan's own army and police force.

Karzai has come under criticism for embracing some of Afghanistan's most notorious warlords, including his vice presidential running mate

Mohammad Qasim Fahim, and his defense adviser, Gen. Rashid Dostum, who has been accused of killing hundreds of Taliban prisoners in 2001 by suffocating them in sealed cargo containers.

Karzai defended those ties, saying many of those now branded as warlords had received "millions and millions of dollars" from the United States for their help in fighting the Taliban in the 2001 U.S.-led invasion. □

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Former Liberian President Charles Taylor is seen at the U.N.-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague, Netherlands, Monday, July 13, 2009.

Associated Press

AMSTERDAM (AP) — Former Liberian President Charles Taylor said Monday he was sickened by allegations at his war crimes trial that he ate human flesh, calling testimony by a former aide the lies of an illiterate man.

“I felt like throwing up when I heard that nonsense, and I think even the prosecution were shocked at

Charles Taylor denies cannibalism accusations

listening to that foolishness,” he told the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague.

Taylor, beginning his third week on the stand, said the stories of cannibalism by a former officer in his militia were “statements of lies, statements of deceit and deception.”

He also denied trading arms for diamonds with Sierra Leone rebels, a central allegation of his indictment.

Taylor is accused of arming and supplying Sierra Leone militias whose signature crime during the 1991-2002 civil war was hacking off the limbs of civilians to terrorize them into submission. He has denied all 11 counts of murder, rape and recruiting child soldiers in the neighboring country.

Taylor was responding to testimony last year from Joseph Marzah, who said Taylor ordered his men to eat the flesh of his enemies, including African peacekeepers and U.N. soldiers. Marzah said that would “set an example for the people to be afraid.”

Marzah, also known as “Zigzag,” described himself as a former chief of operations for Taylor and commander of a death squad.

Using maps of the border region, Taylor also testified Monday he couldn’t have traded arms because neither of the two roads that led to the Sierra Leone

border could support vehicles laden with weapons, as alleged by a prosecution witness.

“No road existed then, and no road exists now,” he told the court. The only access was by rough roads surfaced with rocks and dirt.

Varmuyan Sherif, a former Taylor bodyguard, testified last year that he escorted pickup trucks to the border loaded with automatic rifle ammunition and rocket-propelled grenades. The court was shown a picture of Sherif with a truck allegedly photographed on the border.

“I say bluntly, it’s a lie,” Taylor said.

He also described as “ludicrous” Sherif’s allegation that he accepted diamonds from the Sierra Leone rebels, who sometimes sent them in mayonnaise jars.

“Liberia is a very rich country” with abundant diamonds, gold deposits and uranium, Taylor said, adding that he had been negotiating with the U.S. company Halliburton to develop offshore oil reserves.

“It is beyond my imagination that anyone would believe that the president of Liberia would go into Sierra Leone because he wants to terrorize the people and take their wealth,” he said. □

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Myanmar democracy leader wins top Amnesty honor

SHAWN POGATCHNIK

Associated Press Writer

DUBLIN (AP) — Myanmar's long-detained democracy leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, is receiving Amnesty International's highest honor, U2's Bono publicly announced before 80,000 cheering fans. The human rights watchdog earlier Monday said it hoped the Ambassador of Conscience Award would help protect her as she faces a potential prison sentence.

"Her crime is that, if she was free to participate in elections, she would win. This week the brutal force that has her incarcerated will decide if she spends the next five years in prison," Bono said. He added his wish that Suu Kyi's latest international honor "will help keep her safe."

Amnesty International leaders said the award was timed to coincide with the 20th anniversary of Suu Kyi's initial arrest on July 20, 1989, as she led a campaign to oust Myanmar's military dictators. Suu Kyi's opposition party, the National League for Democracy, won national elections in 1990 but the military refused to relinquish

power. She won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 but has been under house arrest for 14 of the past 20 years.

Suu Kyi, 64, is on trial for allegedly harboring an American who swam out to her residence uninvited. The offense of violating house-arrest rules carries a potential five-year prison sentence, and foreign diplomats have been barred from key parts of her trial. Suu Kyi's supporters accuse Myanmar's junta of seeking to put her behind bars until after elections planned for 2010.

Former Czech President Vaclav Havel, a fellow Nobel recipient and the first winner of the Ambassador of Conscience Award in 2003, said foreign recognition probably has deterred Myanmar's rulers from imposing even harsher punishments on Suu Kyi.

"I know from my own experience that international attention can, to a certain extent, protect the unjustly persecuted from punishments that would otherwise be imposed. ... Goodness knows what would have happened if her fate had not been highlighted as it is again today," Havel said in a



Images of Aung San Suu Kyi are seen during a U2 performance at Croke Park in Dublin Monday July 27, 2009. Myanmar's long-detained democracy leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, is receiving Amnesty International's highest honor, U2's Bono publicly announced Monday before 80,000 cheering fans.

Associated Press

statement.

U2 — which won the top Amnesty honor in 2005 in recognition of Bono's humanitarian campaigning — has been honoring Suu Kyi at each performance of the band's ongoing European tour.

More than 100 people walked on stage Monday night,

holding Suu Kyi masks over their faces, as U2 performed its 2000 song honoring Suu Kyi, "Walk On."

An Amnesty International official who attended the concert, Donna Jean Guest, said the London-based organization hoped one day to be able to present Suu Kyi the award in person. Amnesty

officials were permitted to visit her most recently in 2003.

"She should never have been arrested in the first place," said Guest, Amnesty's deputy director for the Asia-Pacific region. "We have been very concerned from the start that the authorities would use any pretext to lock her up until after the elections." □

Rocket launchers sold to Venezuela went to FARC

FRANK BAJAK

Associated Press Writer

BOGOTA (AP) — Swedish-made anti-tank rocket launchers sold to Venezuela years ago were obtained by Colombia's main rebel group, and Sweden said Monday it was demanding an explanation.

Colombia said its military found the weapons in a captured rebel arms cache and that Sweden had recently confirmed they originally were sold to Venezuela's military.

The confirmation strengthens Colombian allegations that Hugo Chavez's government has aided the leftist Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC.

The bazooka-like AT-4 single-use launchers, made by Saab Bofors Dynamics, lack the precision and range of surface-to-air weapons and there is no evidence FARC rebels have used any in combat. President Alvaro Uribe complained over the weekend that if Colombia had kept quiet about the weapons "they'll fire them and obtain more and no one in the international community will halt their sale."

Venezuela's justice minister, Tareck El Aissami, on Monday dismissed the report of the missiles, denying that "our government or institutions have ever collaborated with any type of criminal or terrorist organizations."

He told state television that the case of the rocket

launchers appears "a cheap film of the U.S. government."

Three launchers were recovered in October in a FARC arms cache belonging to a rebel commander known as "Jhon 40" and Colombia only recently asked Sweden to confirm whether they had been sold to Venezuela, a senior Colombian official told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to discuss the matter.

In Stockholm, a senior Swedish Trade Ministry official, Jens Eriksson, said his government was working with Colombia "to find out how this happened."

"We have also contacted Venezuelan authorities," he told the AP. "We are still waiting for an answer."

The head of the Swedish government agency that supervises weapons exports, Jan-Erik Lovgren, told Swedish Radio that the weapons were sold to Venezuela in the 1980s.

Lovgren said the incident — a clear violation of end-user licenses — could affect future decisions on whether to allow weapons sales to Venezuela.

"Right now we don't have any ongoing business, but if we were to receive some, we would very likely say no," he added.

Colombian officials leaked electronic documents last year they said were found on the computer of slain FARC No. 2 commander Raul Reyes in which

rebel commanders discussed obtaining bazookas and other arms from Venezuelan officials, including then-military intelligence chief Hugo Carvajal.

Colombia has long maintained that the FARC has been seeking to obtain shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles, whose use would significantly escalate a 45-year-old low-level conflict that has claimed about 3,500 lives annually.

"We know from intelligence that they are now seeking to buy some surface-to-air weapons to try to shoot down our planes," Uribe told reporters on Monday.

Military analyst Anna Gilmour, deputy editor of Jane's Intelligence Review, said the AT-4s don't provide a major boost to the FARC's capability.

"While SAMs are guided missiles that lock on to fast-moving aerial targets such as helicopters, the AT4 fires unguided rockets that can easily miss their target," she said. Jane's Intelligence Weekly first reported on the launchers last week.

It said batches of AT-4s were sold to Venezuela in the 1980s and 1990s but that Saab ceased sales of military equipment to Venezuela in May 2006 in response to a U.S. arms embargo.

Colombian and U.S. officials accuse Venezuela of giving senior FARC leaders refuge and of allowing the rebels to smuggle tons of cocaine through the country. Chavez's government denies the accusations. □

SPORTS

Aruba TODAY

Michael Vick reinstated by NFL

BARRY WILNER

AP Football Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Michael Vick was reinstated by NFL commissioner Roger Goodell on Monday and could play in regular season games as early as October.

Vick can immediately participate in preseason practices, workouts and meetings and can play in the final two preseason games — if he can find a team that will sign him. A number of teams have already said they would not.

“Needless to say, your margin for error is extremely limited,” Goodell said in a letter to Vick. “I urge you to take full advantage of the resources available to support you and to dedicate yourself to rebuilding your life and your career. If you do this, the NFL will support you.” Goodell suspended Vick indefinitely in August 2007 after the former Atlanta Falcons quarterback admitted bankrolling the “Bad Newz Kennels” dogfighting operation. Goodell said then that Vick must show remorse and signs that he has changed before he would consider reinstating him. Once the season begins, Vick may participate in all team activities except games, and Goodell said he would consider Vick for full reinstatement by Week 6 (Oct. 18-19).

Goodell called a news conference for late Monday afternoon.



NFL commissioner Roger Goodell announces that he has reinstated Michael Vick with conditions, Monday, July 27, 2009, in New York. Vick was suspended in August 2007 when the quarterback admitted bankrolling a dogfighting operation on his property in Virginia.

“I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to commissioner Goodell for allowing me to be readmitted to the National Football League,” Vick said through agent Joel Segal. “I fully understand that playing football in the NFL is a privilege, not a right, and I am truly thankful for the opportunity I have been given. “As you can imagine, the last two years have given me time to re-evaluate my life, mature as an individual and fully understand the terrible mistakes I have made in the past and what type of life I must lead moving forward.

The announcement came after a busy first week of freedom

for Vick, who met with union leaders and Goodell on consecutive days last week. His 23-month federal sentence ended when an electronic monitor was removed from his ankle early on July 20 at his home in Virginia.

He met with DeMaurice Smith, executive director of the NFL Players Association, last Tuesday and, on Wednesday, he sat down with Goodell at a security firm in New Jersey. But his issues are far from over. Already, the owners of the New York Giants and New York Jets said they have no interest in the 29-year-old quarterback, who once was the league’s highest-paid player. □

Associated Press

Green wins Canadian Open in 2-hole playoff



Nathan Green, of Australia, holds the trophy after winning the Canadian Open golf championship in Oakville, Ontario, on Monday July 27, 2009. Green defeated Retief Goosen on the second hole of a playoff.

Associated Press

JOHN NICHOLSON

AP Sports Writer

OAKVILLE, Ontario (AP) — Nathan Green won the Canadian Open on Monday for his first PGA Tour victory, beating Retief Goosen with a par on the second hole of a playoff in the rain-delayed tournament.

After Green missed a 12-foot birdie attempt on the par-4 17th, Goosen’s 8-foot par try slid right, ending the first Monday finish in the national championship since

1988.

“It’s a huge surprise to finally win,” said Green, the 34-year-old former Canadian Tour player from Toronto — Toronto, Australia, that is. “This is where I started my pro career. I love coming up here. The people are great.”

In sunny conditions, Green completed a third-round 69 with an eagle on 18 and shot a 68 in the fourth round at saturated Glen Abbey. Goosen three-putted the 18th for par and a 67 in the morning, then eagled it in the afternoon for a 69.

Goosen had a putt to win on 18 on the first extra hole, but missed a 6-foot birdie try after leaving his bunker shot above the hole.

Anthony Kim (66-73) and Jason Dufner (70-73) tied for third, four strokes back at 14 under in the event soaked by nearly 5 inches of rain the first four days. Lee Janzen (70-67), Brandt Snedeker (67-68) and Jerry Kelly (72-71) followed at 14 under.

Stephen Ames was the top Canadian, tying for eighth at 12 under after rounds of 72 and 67. Mike Weir (69-71) tied for 24th at 10 under. □



Aaron Piersol of the United States reacts after completing the Men’s 100M Backstroke semifinal, at the FINA Swimming World Championships in Rome, Monday, July 27, 2009.

Associated Press

PAUL NEWBERRY

AP National Writer

ROME (AP) — On a night when five more world records

bit the dust, Aaron Piersol still figured he could just coast through the semifinals of his signature event. He didn’t

As more world records fall, Peirsol provides a stunner

want to push himself too hard, figured he could save a little energy for the final swim. Big mistake.

Peirsol, the world-record holder and two-time Olympic champion in the 100-meter backstroke, was stunningly knocked out in the semifinals Monday, caught off guard by the lightning-quick times that dealt another beating to the record book on the second day of the world swimming

championships.

There’s been a staggering 11 world records set at the final major meet for high-tech bodysuits, with six more days still to go.

The suits — some made of 100 percent rubber — will be banned starting in 2010, but that’s not soon enough for swimming purists who believe this Roman speed show is nothing more than a sad spectacle ruining the integrity

of the sport.

Peirsol was wearing one of those newfangled suits, but it sure didn’t help. His time of 53.22 seconds was nearly a full second behind the top qualifier, Japan’s Junya Koga, and a tenth of a second out of the eighth spot, the last that advances to the final.

Peirsol lingered in the water, staring at the scoreboard in disbelief.

Continued on page B13

NL Roundup

Phillies hit 4 homers, beat Cardinals 9-2

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Chase Utley, Ryan Howard, Jimmy Rollins and Raul Ibanez all hit two-run home runs to lead the Philadelphia Phillies to a 9-2 win over the St. Louis Cardinals in the National League on Sunday. Joe Blanton (7-4) had another effective outing, allowing two runs and he struck out six over eight innings. Blanton has allowed two runs or less and pitched at least seven innings in five of his last six starts for the NL East leaders. Howard had three RBIs to lift the Phillies to their 17th win in 20 games. Mark DeRosa hit a solo homer for the Cardinals, who dropped two of three in a matchup of division leaders.

Cubs 5, Reds 2

At Chicago, Rich Harden pitched six stellar innings to win a day game at Wrigley Field for the first time since last August as Chicago moved into first place with a victory over Cincinnati.

The Cubs have won 10 of their last 13 games to move a half-game ahead of St. Louis in the NL Central, their first appearance in the top spot since April 21.

The Reds wrapped up an 0-6 road trip, getting outscored 43-20 in their first winless multi-series trip in five years. After laboring through three innings, Cincinnati starter Micah Owings (6-11) was pulled with what the team called a "tight right shoulder."

At Houston, Livan Hernandez struck out a season-high seven batters after a rough start as New York put together another well-balanced offensive performance in a win over Houston.

Hernandez (7-5) allowed only four singles after the Astros built a 3-0 lead in the first inning. He threw 107 pitches in seven innings and won his second straight start after losing the previous four.

Luis Castillo, Jeff Francoeur

and David Wright drove in two runs apiece for the Mets, who had at least 12 hits for the third straight game. New York beat Houston 10-3 on Saturday after scoring fewer than five runs in 15 of its previous 20 games.

At Milwaukee, Casey Kotchman hit a three-run homer and Nate McLouth made a pair of great catches in center when starter Derek Lowe began to tire, lifting the surging Atlanta to a win over Milwaukee.

Kotchman's deep drive to right field off Braden Loper in the sixth was the difference for Atlanta, which has won eight of 11 since the All-Star break.

Brian McCann, who went 3 for 4, added a solo homer in the seventh and Kelly Johnson hit a two-run shot in the ninth as the Brewers' bullpen imploded for five runs, including two more in the eighth on a dropped fly by center fielder Jody Gerut and a bases loaded walk by Mike Burns.

At Washington, Austin Kearns drove in the winning run with a two-out, 10th-inning single as Washington beat San Diego.

Nyjer Morgan, held out of the

starting lineup with a tight left hamstring before entering the game as a pinch hitter in the eighth, led off the decisive rally with a bunt single down the third base line off Greg Burke (2-3).

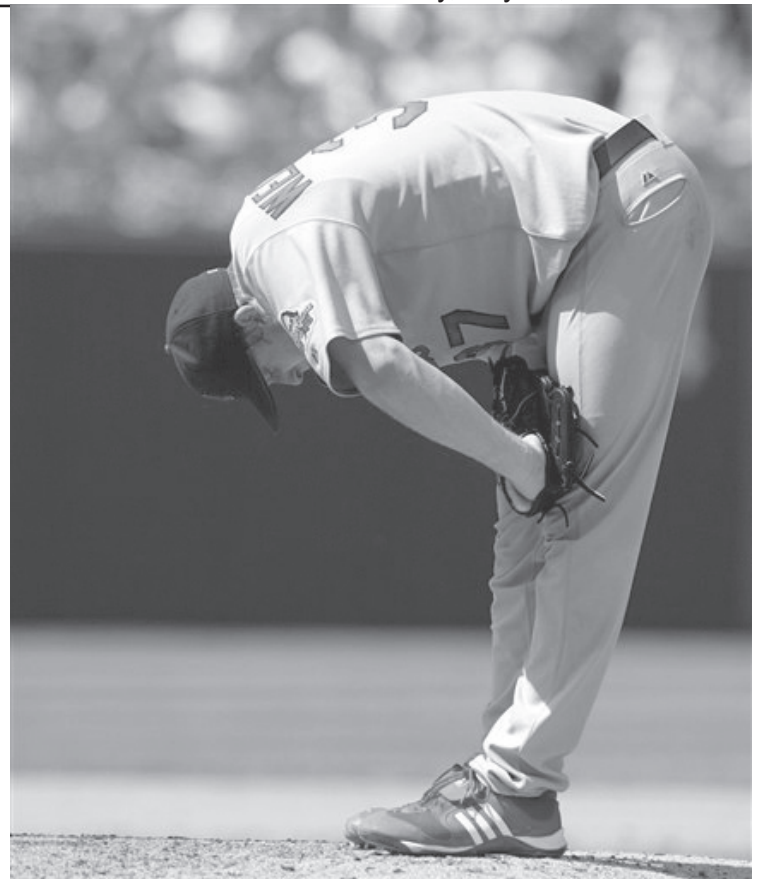
Willie Harris sacrificed Morgan, Nick Johnson was intentionally walked and Ryan Zimmerman flew out. Kearns then shot a single into the gap in right-center.

Joe Beimel (1-5) got the final two outs of the 10th for the victory. Josh Willingham also homered for Washington, which finished its first homestand under interim manager Jim Riggleman with a 4-7 record.

At Denver, Aaron Cook pitched seven sharp innings to win his seventh straight decision and Seth Smith scored two runs, leading Colorado to a win over San Francisco.

Cook (10-3) had his trademark sinker working all afternoon, getting the Giants to hit into 16 groundouts. He allowed nine hits and struck out two. Cook hasn't lost since June 1 at Houston.

Franklin Morales pitched a perfect eighth and Huston Street retired the Giants in order in the ninth for his 25th



St. Louis Cardinals starting pitcher Todd Wellemeyer waits on the mound to be taken out in the sixth inning of a baseball game with the Philadelphia Phillies, Sunday, July 26, 2009, in Philadelphia. The Phillies won 9-2.

Associated Press

save in 26 chances.

By taking two of three in the series, the Rockies increased their NL wild-card lead to two games over the Giants.

Diamondbacks 9, Pirates 0

At Phoenix, Mark Reynolds and Gerardo Parra each hit two-run homers and Parra finished with four RBIs as Arizona made it easy for right-hander Max Scherzer in a victory over Pittsburgh.

Reynolds' homer in the third inning, his 26th of the season, gave Arizona a 4-0 lead, and Parra's fifth homer of the season capped the scoring

with two outs in the eighth. He finished a triple short of the cycle.

Arizona had eight extra-base hits, including a double and a triple by shortstop Stephen Drew, who extended his hitting streak to eight games.

In other NL games it was, Washington 3, San Diego 2, 10 innings; Philadelphia 9, St. Louis 2; Atlanta 10, Milwaukee 2; N.Y. Mets 8, Houston 3; Chicago Cubs 5, Cincinnati 2; Colorado 4, San Francisco 2; Florida 8, L.A. Dodgers 6; and Arizona 9, Pittsburgh 0. □



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AL Roundup

Twins rookie Swarzak ends Angels' 8-game streak



Minnesota Twins starting pitcher Anthony Swarzak delivers against the Los Angeles Angels during the first inning of a baseball game Sunday, July 26, 2009, in Anaheim, Calif.

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, California (AP) — Justin Morneau hit two homers and rookie Anthony Swarzak shutdown a potent lineup by pitching into the seventh inning as the Minnesota Twins ended the Los Angeles Angels' eight-game winning streak with a 10-1 victory in the American League on Sunday.

Denard Span homered and drove in a season-high four runs, and even light-hitting Nick Punto added

a season-best three RBIs as the Twins ended a four-game losing streak.

Swarzak (3-3) allowed just four hits and three walks in his eighth career start, throwing 121 pitches against one of the majors' most productive offenses.

Kendry Morales' fourth-inning homer was the first hit for Los Angeles, which scored 62 runs during its streak before sputtering on a sweltering day in Orange County.

Morneau hit a two-run homer in the first inning and a solo shot in the seventh as the Twins battered Los Angeles starter Ervin Santana (3-6) for six runs.

Rangers 7, Royals 2

At Kansas City, Missouri, Dustin Nippert allowed one hit in a stellar job of relief pitching as Texas scored seven times off the Kansas City bullpen.

Nippert was forced into action when Rangers starter Kevin Millwood left after two innings with tightness in his left gluteus. He gave up a run in the seventh on Alex Gordon's single, the only hit he allowed. Nippert (3-0) walked two, hit a batter and struck out one in 4 2-3 innings.

Ron Mahay (1-1), the first of four relievers, faced two batters and gave up two hits to take the loss for the Royals. They've lost 11 of 12 overall.

Orioles 6, Red Sox 2

At Boston, Nick Markakis homered and drove in three runs off a struggling John Smoltz as Baltimore snapped an 11-game losing streak at Boston's Fenway Park.

Markakis hit a sacrifice fly in the first inning, an RBI double in the third and a solo homer in the fifth that gave the Orioles a 6-0 lead.

David Hernandez (3-2) allowed one run in seven innings, helping Baltimore to its first win in Boston since July 11, 2008, and its third win in its last 30 games against AL East opponents.

The 24-year-old rookie outpitched 21-year veteran Smoltz (1-4), whose comeback from offseason shoulder surgery has been rocky. He gave up six earned runs in five innings.

Yankees 7, Athletics 5

At New York, Derek Jeter hit a go-ahead single and

Mariano Rivera earned a four-out save as New York capped a stellar homestand in which they grabbed the AL East.

Robinson Cano had an early three-run double and the Yankees got a strong effort from the bullpen, as they wrapped up a 9-1 start to the second half. After winning for the 22nd time in 28 games, the Yankees hit the road for 19 of their next 26.

Phil Hughes provided more spotless relief, Phil Coke (2-3) got the win even though he gave up a go-ahead homer to Mark Ellis, and Brian Bruney got the ball to Rivera to close out the game.

At Toronto, Scott Rolen hit a three-run homer as Toronto handed Tampa Bay rookie Jeff Niemann his first loss in his last six decisions.

Blue Jays rookie Brett Cecil got the win, allowing one run and four hits in seven innings. Cecil (4-1) walked three and struck out seven. Brandon League pitched the eighth and Jason Frasor finished as the Blue Jays won for just the second time in nine games against the Rays.

One day after blowing an eight-run lead and losing 10-9 in 12 innings, Toronto snapped a three-game losing streak. The Blue Jays have lost seven of their past eight series.

Niemann (9-5) allowed five runs and nine hits in 6 2-3 innings to lose for the first time since May 28 at Cleveland. He walked one and struck out six.

Indians 12, Mariners 3

At Seattle, Grady Sizemore hit the 20th leadoff homer of his career and Jhonny Peralta hit his second career grand slam as Cleveland hit four long balls to finish a three-game sweep.

The Mariners entered the

weekend with optimism about their chances in both the AL West and wild-card races, but it beneath the Indians' offensive onslaught.

Cliff Lee (7-9) gave up a pair of first-inning runs on Franklin Gutierrez's two-out single before retiring the next 13 straight. The reigning AL Cy Young winner finished seven strong innings, giving up just six hits and two runs. He struck out four and walked none.

Jason Vargas (3-4) was recalled from Triple-A Tacoma to make Sunday's start, his first with the Mariners since July 8. He scraped through four innings giving up just two runs, before failing to record an out in a six-run fifth.

White Sox 5, Tigers 1

At Detroit, Paul Konerko hit a two-run homer in Chicago's four-run first, Gordon Beckham added a solo home run the next inning as Chicago coasted and avoided a sweep.

Clayton Richard (4-3) allowed only a run on five hits over eight innings to help the White Sox salvage a four-game series that started with them tied atop the AL Central with Detroit. The Tigers lead Chicago by two games and the Minnesota Twins by four.

Rick Porcello (9-7) gave up five runs and five hits over 5 1-3 innings. The rookie has allowed 19 earned runs in his last four starts after giving up 16 earned runs in the previous 10 outings.

In other AL games it was, N.Y. Yankees 7, Oakland 5; Toronto 5, Tampa Bay 1; Baltimore 6, Boston 2; Texas 7, Kansas City 2; Minnesota 10, L.A. Angels 1; Cleveland 12, Seattle 3; and Chicago White Sox 5, Detroit 1. □

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PEIRSOL

Continued from Page B10

Finally, he climbed out of the pool and walked across the deck, his hands on his hips, clearly disgusted. Less than three weeks earlier, he had pushed the world record to 51.94 at the U.S. nationals. In Rome, he couldn't even make the final.

"It's just a huge miscalculation," said Peirsol, the three-time defending world champion in the 100 back and winner of that event at the last two Olympics. "I thought I was in a much better place, but if you're looking straight up you don't see much." Michael Phelps was taking no chances.

In his first individual event of these championships, Phelps breezed through the preliminaries and semifinals of the 200 freestyle, though it looks as though he'll have some tough competition in Tuesday's final.

Germany's Paul Biedermann already showed no respect for the swimming greats when he knocked off Ian Thorpe's iconic record in the 400 free, and he'll have the prime No. 4 lane for the final after breezing through the semis in 1 minute, 43.65 seconds — not far off Phelps' world record of 1:42.96.

Phelps won his semifinal heat and was third-fastest overall at 1:45.23. But Biedermann's performance has sure caught his attention.

"He's dropped a lot of time," Phelps said. "Usually you don't see 6 seconds dropped in the 400 in a year. I think he



Ariana Kukors of the United States shows the gold medal in the Women's 200M Individual Medley and setting a world record, at the FINA Swimming World Championships in Rome, Monday, July 27, 2009. Kukors clocked 2.06.15.

Associated Press

was in the final of the 200 free last year (at the Olympics) and he's dropped like three seconds in that, so he's having a good meet. He's having a good year. Tomorrow is going to be a good race."

After the morning prelims, Biedermann said he didn't expect to put up much of a fight against Phelps. The German sounded a lot more confident following the semis.

"I thought Phelps would do better," Biedermann said. "I didn't give it my all in the last 50 meters. It's going to be a close race tomorrow."

There's another factor that can't be overlooked. Biedermann is wearing an Arena X-Glide, a polyurethane suit that is generally considered faster than Speedo's revolutionary but now sooooo-last-year LZR Racer. □

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Guerrilla colombiana accedió a cohetes comprados por Venezuela a Suecia

BOGOTA (AFP) - La guerrilla de las FARC tenía lanzacohetes antitanque comprados por Venezuela a Suecia, reveló este lunes el gobierno colombiano, ante lo cual el país europeo pidió explicaciones a Caracas, en un contexto de tensión regional por un nuevo acuerdo militar entre Estados Unidos y Colombia.

“Ya en varios operativos en los que hemos podido recuperar arsenales de las FARC hemos encontrado municiones potentes, equipos potentes, entre otros armas antitanque que un país europeo le vendió a Venezuela y que aparecieron en manos de las FARC”, dijo el vicepresidente colombiano Francisco Santos.

La declaración de Santos se hizo eco de otra que el domingo dio el presidente Alvaro Uribe sin mencionar específicamente algún país, pero asegurando que su gobierno ya había presentado la “queja a través de los canales diplomáticos a los respectivos” gobiernos.

Este lunes el gobierno sueco avaló la denuncia de Colombia y anunció que pedirá explicaciones a la administración del presidente venezolano Hugo Chávez.

“Está confirmado que una pequeña cantidad de armas producidas en Suecia fue encontrada en un campamento

de las FARC. Pedimos explicaciones a responsables del gobierno de Venezuela para que nos diga cómo explica que este equipamiento haya sido encontrado en Colombia”, dijo en Estocolmo el consejero político del Ministerio sueco de Comercio, Jens Eriksson. Según Eriksson, las armas encontradas habían sido vendidas a Venezuela.

Este lunes el ministro venezolano del Interior, Tareck El Aissami, desestimó las denuncias y sostuvo que se trata de una “nueva arremetida” contra su país, mientras que su homólogo de Relaciones Exteriores, Nicolas Maduro, afirmó que con ello se trata de “justificar” el nuevo acuerdo militar que negocian Bogotá y Washington.

Uribe volvió este lunes sobre el tema, y tras asegurar que las FARC “ahora están buscando comprar unos artefactos tierra-aire para atacar contra nuestros aviones”, pidió ayuda a la comunidad internacional para impedirlo.

Aunque Bogotá ni Estocolmo han revelado las especificaciones ni cantidad de los cohetes incautados a las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC, marxista), la semana pasada en Londres la revista especializada en defensa Jane's

informó que los artefactos serían del modelo AT4, fabricados por la compañía sueca Saab Bofors Dynamics. “Todos los países hacia donde exportamos deben firmar un certificado de destinatario final, sino la exportación no se autoriza. Desgraciadamente, a veces, un arma termina allí adonde no debería llegar, pero es muy raro”, explicó la empresa en un correo electrónico enviado a la AFP. La revista colombiana Semana, que entró en circulación el domingo, dice que desde hace casi dos meses Bogotá puso en conocimiento de Caracas la incautación a las FARC de “varios lanzacohetes AT-4”, pero que hasta ahora no ha recibido respuesta.

Los lanzacohetes fueron encontrados por el Ejército en julio de 2008 en un campamento de las FARC, según el artículo.

Tras el hallazgo, el gobierno colombiano entró en contacto con el gobierno de Suecia, cuya embajada en Bogotá confirmó hace más de tres meses que los números de serie corresponden a un lote que vendió la empresa sueca al ejército de Venezuela, añadió la revista.

La revelación de la incautación de ese material bélico al grupo rebelde más importante de



Un soldado colombiano observa el cuerpo de un miembro de las FARC en una zona rural de la localidad de Puerto Rico, en el departamento colombiano de Meta, el 25 de julio de 2009. Foto: Luis Ramírez/AFP

Colombia, se produce en medio de la nueva tensión entre Bogotá y Caracas por la negociación de un nuevo acuerdo con Washington para que realice “operaciones antidrogas y contra el terrorismo” desde bases colombianas.

Esa posibilidad, con la que

Washington pretende suplir la base militar de Manta en Ecuador, cerrada la semana pasada por disposición del gobierno de ese país, también provocó el rechazo del mandatario ecuatoriano Rafael Correa y sus homólogos de Bolivia, Evo Morales, y Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega. □

Uribe nombra como nuevo ministro de Defensa al ejecutivo cafetero Gabriel Silva

Bogotá (EFE).- El presidente de Colombia, Álvaro Uribe, nombró como nuevo ministro de Defensa a Gabriel Silva, gerente de la Federación Nacional de Cafeteros y hombre cercano a su antecesor en esa cartera, Juan Manuel Santos, informó hoy el Gobierno.

Según un comunicado de la oficina de prensa de la Presidencia, Silva tomará posesión del cargo en agosto.

Silva sucederá a Juan Manuel Santos, que renunció en mayo pasado y planea presentarse

como candidato a los comicios presidenciales de 2010 si Uribe no opta finalmente a una segunda reelección.

Desde la renuncia de Santos el ministerio de Defensa ha estado dirigido de forma interina por el general Freddy Padilla de León, jefe de las Fuerzas Militares de Colombia.

Uribe destacó “la excelente labor” cumplida por Padilla de León, que continuará como jefe de las Fuerzas Militares, detalló el comunicado de la Presidencia. □



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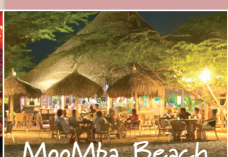
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